

EXPEDITION FROM FORT ABERCROMBIE TO FORT BENTON.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

IN ANSWER TO

*Resolution of House of 19th instant, transmitting report of Captain J. L. Fisk, of the expedition to escort emigrants from Fort Abercrombie to Fort Benton, &c.*

MARCH 2, 1863.—Laid on the table and ordered to be printed.

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
*Washington City, February 27, 1863.*

SIR: In compliance with the resolution of the House of Representatives of the 19th instant, I have the honor to transmit the accompanying "copy of Captain James L. Fisk's report of the expedition to escort emigrants from Fort Abercrombie to Fort Benton, and to Fort Walla-Walla."

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDWIN M. STANTON,  
*Secretary of War.*

Hon. GALUSHA A. GROW,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

*North overland expedition for protection of emigrants from Fort Abercrombie to Fort Benton, 1862.—Report of Captain James L. Fisk, A. Q. M. com'g.*

SIR: Under instructions of the Secretary of War, I was despatched from this place, on the 3d day of June last, to proceed at once to organize, equip, and conduct an escort to emigrant train from Fort Abercrombie, across the plains of the north, to Fort Benton, Dakota Territory; thence across the mountains, *via* Captain Mullan's government wagon road, to Walla-Walla—there dispose of the expedition property, and return *via* Oregon and San Francisco.

The fact that most of the route designated for my trip was entirely new, (except as surveyed by the late lamented General Stevens, in 1853,) and that the season was so far advanced before orders reached me at my regiment in

Central Tennessee, together with the limited means placed at my disposal, led me to doubt much whether I could accomplish the objects of this commission. Having entered upon the work, however, and done the best in my power under the circumstances, I am pleased to be able to report at this date the experience and general results of the expedition.

Samuel R. Bond, esq., who accompanied me as clerk and journalist, respectfully submits a summary of his notes, and which is a fair statement of principal incidents of trip, topography of country, &c.

In the proper place will be found the brief report of Dr. Dibb, physician and surgeon of party; and I likewise offer for your consideration, as supplementary to the general report required, an itinerary of each day's travel, with accompanying chart of route from Fort Abercrombie to Fort Benton.

I need hardly assure you, in this connexion, of my personal regards and esteem for those gentlemen, one and all, who accompanied me as assistants—part of them the entire journey. Always true, and never found wanting in the discharge of duty, I can but commend them for those good qualities which fit men for public service.

The importance at present attached to this route, and which will very much increase as the new gold fields opened up by it come into note, constrains me to believe it justifiable in extending my report so as to cover all the chief points of interest, and to believe that the itinerary and map furnished will prove of great utility if published.

That our little expedition, being wholly an experiment, succeeded beyond the most sanguine expectations is attributable to several facts, viz: Nearly if not quite all of the men of the escort and emigrants had seen more or less of frontier life, were not afraid to encounter hardships, and knew how to surmount impediments in whatever shape occurring. The season was most wonderfully favorable, plenty of grazing and water for our purpose, and yet not sufficient rain at any time to swell the streams or soften the basins of the prairie country.

Our organization was complete, not only of the fifty (50) men of the escort, but of the emigrants also, in case of an emergency. No violation of rules occurred from first to last; every order was promptly and cheerfully obeyed. We moved, halted, camped, corralled on the march, rallied, mounted guard, &c., by bugle calls.

We had no serious difficulties with Indians, though we met numerous bands and tribes, and were not aware, until met in the mountains by an express from Walla-Walla, giving news how narrowly we had escaped the terrible raid of the Sioux on the border of Minnesota, even laying siege to the very post which we had shortly previous started from.

The Assineboines were "saucy," which with them is preliminary to mischief. Their conduct convinced me that they were knowing to the raid of the Sioux Indians, and that they themselves were becoming infected with a desire for plunder.

It required more nerve to *refrain* from punishing them for their insolence than to have done it. The traders along the Missouri besought me to urge upon the department the necessity of establishing one or more military posts along that river, between Forts Berthold and Benton. From what I could see and learn, I do not hesitate to say that the presence of troops is absolutely necessary to insure the safe occupancy and transit of that upper country by the whites.

The severe chastisement of the hostile Sioux the coming season would intimidate the Missouri river and mountain tribes; and the distribution of an infantry or cavalry regiment along the Missouri, from Fort Berthold to Benton, with headquarters in the mountain district at the head of that river, where there are most people scattered about, mining, would insure safety in travel, exploration and development of a rich mineral country.

Pierre Chouteau, jr., & Co. take occasion to inform me by letter that they "will most cheerfully give all the accommodations necessary for quartering troops and storing supplies in either or all of their trading posts on the Upper Missouri." These *forts*, as they are called, are not undeserving the name, for they are most admirably adapted as quarters for troops, *militaire* in appearance, and entirely defensible.

After emerging from the Côteau du Missouri on the west side, opposite to the nearest point to the river *Des Lacs*, I was desirous of heading straight for Fort Benton, coming down to Milk river at last crossing, instead of making that circuitous route by Fort Union. But not finding any of my party ready to try the experiment, I moved southward to a camp on the Missouri fifteen (15) miles above Fort Union. On our journey to Fort Benton we were joined by two French half-breed *voyageurs*, from whom I learned that the line of travel from the Côteau to Fort Benton, which I had proposed trying, was in every way practicable for a wagon road, and "*ten days shorter*."

My loss of stock between Abercrombie and Benton were two (2) oxen and one (1) mule. Between Benton and Walla-Walla, one (1) team-horse and one (1) saddle-horse. In the wilderness of St. Regis de Borgia, at the eastern base of the Cœur d'Alène mountains, I found Major Hutchins, Indian agent, in distress, from having lost part of his pack animals while on his journey to relieve Major Owen, agent of the Flathead Indians. In the emergency of his case I felt obliged to relieve him, so far as I could give him anything available for transporting his supplies, and fitted him out with a span of animals and good wagon.

From this point to Walla-Walla I hauled only the howitzer and flag-wagon, and every animal I had was unmarketable, because so very thin in flesh. If I could have had the usual allowance of extra work animals upon the start, such would have been the condition of the whole as to bring, at public sale, at the close of the journey, all they would cost in fitting out.

Captain Mullan's road, from Fort Benton to Walla-Walla, is passable, and there has been performed upon it an immense amount of labor, but it will have to be worked, materially improved in places, or it will very soon become useless as a wagon road.

On leaving St. Paul on the 16th (sixteenth) of June, I had unfurled, from a staff lashed to the front of the express wagon, which led the train, the national colors; and I am proud to say, that it every day floated to the breeze from the Mississippi to the Columbia, and no man insulted it.

At Portland, Oregon, I was glad to meet Captain Medorum Crawford, who had just closed his expedition on the central overland route. We spent a day together in comparing notes. Captain Crawford did not hesitate to congratulate me on having discovered a most desirable route, and one that must soon attract a large emigration over it. I am under obligations to this gentleman for courtesies which he extended to me while there, and for pecuniary favor in my need.

Under dates of December 14 and 27, I am in receipt of letters from very reliable men, who went out with me and are now mining at "Grasshopper diggins," (the *Grasshopper* being a small tributary of the Jefferson fork of the Missouri, and at which place there are now about one thousand (1,000) persons,) stating their general success beyond all expectations, and that "claims are yielding from fifty dollars (\$50) to one hundred and fifty dollars (\$150) per day to the man."

Reaching this city, on my return, about the 1st of the present month, I hastened to prepare this report, which I now have the honor to submit.

With very great respect, I am, sir, your most obedient servant,

JAMES L. FISK,

Captain, A. Q. M., Commanding Expedition

General THOMAS,

Adjutant General United States Army, Washington, D. C.

*Journal of the expedition commanded by Captain James L. Fisk, sent by the government to escort emigrants from Fort Abercrombie to Fort Benton, 1862.*

The recent and continued discoveries of gold in Oregon and Washington Territories having incited an extensive emigration to those regions, Congress, by act approved January 27, 1862, appropriated the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars for the purpose of affording, to such as should wish to make the overland trip, a safe escort through the various Indian tribes inhabiting the country along the route, as well as that efficient aid which an emigrant train cannot fail to derive from the organization and order which it becomes one of the chief duties of the commander of such an escort to secure and preserve.

The usual route of emigration westward, across the plains and mountains, has been the central one by way of Fort Laramie, Salt Lake, and the South Pass; at least the government had never sent an escort for the protection of emigrants by what may be called the extreme northern route, and it had never been tried by them. In 1853 Governor Stevens, of Washington Territory, who has so recently and gloriously fallen in his country's cause, made his explorations for a route for a Pacific railroad, near the forty-seventh and forty-ninth parallels of north latitude, from St. Paul to Puget sound, starting from Fort Snelling, Minnesota, and passing over a country not before explored to Fort Union, on the Missouri river; thence to Fort Benton, and through the mountains into the valley of the Bitter Root, and onward to the Columbia. Since then a military road has been laid out and constructed, under the supervision of Lieutenant Mullan, between Fort Benton and Fort Walla-Walla, but that portion of the route pursued by Governor Stevens, lying between the western boundary of Minnesota and Fort Union, had not been travelled since 1853. Many persons on the Upper Mississippi, especially in Minnesota, in the spring of last year, were desirous of crossing the plains by this route to the new El Dorados beyond, but were diffident about starting without an escort, on account of the difficulty and uncertainty of finding the best and most direct course over the trackless plain to Fort Benton, as well as on account of their fears lest the Indians, and especially the Sioux, should prove hostile and troublesome to a private party which they found travelling through their country, while they would feel comparatively safe if accompanied by a small protective force sent under the auspices of the government.

To afford guidance and protection to these emigrants, and at the same time test the practicability of this northern route for future emigration, the Secretary of War, under whose direction the above appropriation was to be expended, set apart five thousand dollars, and Captain James L. Fisk, assistant quartermaster United States volunteers, was appointed to command the expedition, with authority to employ assistants, who were at once to enlist "about fifty men as a protective corps, to be used as guards, sentries, scouting parties, and in such other ways as the best means of affording protection to emigrants might require." Competent persons were also to be engaged as physician, guide, and interpreter, whose services were to be freely rendered for the advantage of the whole party. His instructions required Captain Fisk to make Fort Abercrombie the point of rendezvous, and to disband the guard upon his arrival at Fort Benton. Immediately upon the receipt of his instructions, Captain Fisk proceeded to make his preliminary arrangements at St. Paul, and appointed the following assistants, namely: First assistant, E. H. Burritt; second assistant, N. P. Langford; third assistant, (surveyor,) David Charlton; secretary or journalist, S. R. Bond; physician, William D. Dibb, M. D.; wagonmaster, R. C. Knox; guide and Chippewa interpreter, Pierre Bottineau; Sioux interpreter, George Gere.

## PIERRE BOTTINEAU.

In former years our guide had been a Red river hunter, and he was one of Governor Stevens's guides in 1853, so that it was considered a stroke of good fortune to be able to secure his services, which the progress of our journey, over a country where there was no sign of trail either of Indian or white man, proved to be invaluable; and our Sioux interpreter had but recently come from a residence of many years among the Yanctons, Sissetons, and other tribes of that nation.

Having been appointed secretary of this humble expedition, I have kept a full daily record of the marches made, camping places, the leading incidents on the route, the character of the country passed over, &c., &c., from the departure of Captain Fisk from St. Paul to his arrival at Walla-Walla, and, indeed, until he reached New York on his homeward trip. Such a journal is necessarily voluminous, and as, from the nature of the expedition, it could not partake of the character of a scientific exploration, its daily marches and events in detail, although full of interest to those who participated in them, would be of little interest to others and irrelevant to the purpose of this report, namely: to indicate the general character of the route travelled, its advantages and disadvantages for emigration, and the degree of success which has attended this expedition. This will, I think, be as well accomplished by the following condensed summary of my journal as if the whole should be given *in extenso*.

## DEPARTURE FROM ST. PAUL.—ARRIVAL AT FORT ABERCROMBIE.

A few days in St. Paul sufficed to complete the necessary preparations for starting, and on the 16th of June Captain Fisk, having received his instructions from Washington, on or about the last day of May, our small supply and baggage train, consisting of three 4-ox teams, one 2-mule team, and one 2-horse team, set out from there for Fort Abercrombie, which is situated on the west bank of the Red River of the North, about two hundred and fifty-five (255) miles northwest from St. Paul. Meanwhile notice had been given for those wishing to join the train to rendezvous at that post by the first of July, and when we arrived there, on the third (3d) of that month, we found quite a party of emigrants awaiting us, while letters from others stated that they were on the way. We formed a camp near the fort, to wait for those who had started to join us, and to make the final preparations which the long journey before us rendered necessary; and for valuable assistance in this respect, as well as for every courtesy and kindness in their power to render, we were indebted to Captain Vanderhorek, commander of the post, Dr. E. E. Braun post surgeon, and Lieutenant Groetsch, quartermaster.

## CELEBRATION OF THE FOURTH OF JULY.

We here had the pleasure of joining the officers and soldiers of the fort and the settlers of that neighborhood in an appropriate celebration of the anniversary of our national independence, before starting on our long journey, the greatest deprivation of which was to be the suspense under which we must remain for months as to the progress of our arms in crushing the rebellion that would undo the great act of ('76) seventy-six.

## FEARS OF EMIGRANTS.

A day or two before we got ready to depart the emigrants expressed fears of the dangers which we might encounter in taking the most direct route from Fort Abercrombie to Fort Union, on account of the absence of any trail, through a

country about which so little was known, and more especially on account of anticipated hostility on the part of the Sioux, who range over a large part of the country through which our route would take us. A party of about eighty emigrants had started from Minnesota about a month before (not knowing that an escort would be sent by the government) for the new gold regions, and to avoid these Indians they took a less direct route by way of Pembina and St. Josephs, which lie about two hundred and fifty (250) miles to the north of Fort Abercrombie. This route the emigrants of our party were desirous of taking, notwithstanding Captain Fisk's expressed determination not to make such a detour out of a direct course, and their apprehensions could not be allayed until he had obtained from the fort a 12lb. (twelve pound) mountain howitzer, with ammunition and equipments, and organized an artillery squad to take charge of it. The belief that the Indians would be more awed by this than by an increase of our escort to double its number, reconciled them to the route proposed, and it was announced that the train would start on Monday, July 7.

#### LEAVE ABERCROMBIE.

On the morning of that day a party of men was sent out to throw a bridge across Wild Rice river, a small stream flowing northeastwardly and emptying into Red river, below Fort Abercrombie. At the point selected for crossing it was some five (5) feet wide and four and a half (4½) feet deep, with soft muddy bottom. The timber on its banks afforded the means of bridging it with ease, and before noon it was ready for our train to cross, when it should arrive, which it did in the afternoon, and camped near the opposite bank, with excellent wood, water, and grazing. The morning of the 8th opened with heavy rain showers, which lasted until near noon. Our train, however, started at an early hour, during a short intermission in the rain, and proceeded a distance of sixteen and a half (16½) miles, which brought us to a very fine camping place, on the right bank of the Shayenne river. The country between the Wild Rice and the Shayenne is a level prairie, with rich soil and tall grass, presenting a beautiful picture to the view, as it stretched out in every direction far as the eye could reach, unbroken except by the dark green lines of timber which mark the course of these two streams. The only water between the Wild Rice and the Shayenne, along our course, is a lake over a mile in circumference, which we passed about three miles before reaching the latter stream, the waters of which are strongly alkaline. At this camp our stock luxuriated in the richest pasture, and had it not been for the mosquitoes, which were large, numerous, and persistent in their annoyances, there would have been no drawback to the pleasures of camp life, which are by no means few or inconsiderable. Some of our party opened a spring about half-way down the bank of the river, which affords almost ice-cold water. The Shayenne at this point, which was selected for crossing, is well-timbered with a thick growth of bass wood, poplar and oak, flows northwestwardly into the Red river, has a swift current, deep, steep banks, and is about seventy-five (75) feet wide and six (6) or eight (8) feet deep.

#### FIRST CROSSING OF SHAYENNE RIVER.

*Wednesday, July 9.*—Early this morning escorts and emigrants were at work felling and hauling trees for the construction of a bridge. Many of them were Minnesota lumbermen, and could not be more in their element than when it became necessary to swim the stream and float logs across. Some of them jumped in and stemmed the swift current with their clothes on, even to their hats, and with their pipes in their mouths, as though it were but a pastime for them. Considerable digging was necessary to render the descent and ascent practicable for loaded wagons, but this was soon accomplished, for the axe and

the spade are both handled like playthings by such pioneers as our train was principally composed of. The members of the escort were of the same class as the emigrants, and were, indeed, almost entirely enlisted from among them, but such of them only were taken as had no families or wagons requiring their attention, in case they were needed for other duties.

A bridge was constructed by two o'clock, by throwing across the stream three heavy stringers, and then making a road-bed of logs, and all our train was safely over by four. For a mile and a half on the other side our route was through thick timber, among which we wound our way with as little felling of trees as possible. Beyond this timber opens again a broad level prairie, on the edge of which we found a camping place equally as fine as that of last night, for the river bends so abruptly towards the west, just below our point of crossing, as to again flow close to our camp. Our train now consisted of one hundred and seventeen (117) men, and thirteen (13) women, one hundred and sixty-eight (168) oxen, eight (8) mules, fourteen (14) team horses, thirteen (13) saddle horses, seventeen (17) cows, with the inevitable camp accompaniment of dogs too numerous to mention. At night we shut our cattle in a corral formed of our wagons, picket our horses and mules close to camp, and have four men on guard, with two reliefs, the captain and his assistants acting in turn as sergeants of the guard. This precaution against surprise or horse-stealing on the part of the Indians, who are liable to be in the vicinity at any time, and who, though they may profess never so much friendship for the white man, will not allow an opportunity to steal our stock pass unimproved, cannot safely be relaxed until we reach Fort Benton, and will be increased should there be special reasons for it. The wagons of the emigrants as well as of the escort are all numbered, to regulate their proper places in the train, and have the letters U. S. conspicuously emblazoned on their sides; for the Indians well know their significance, and would hesitate to attack a government train, when they would feel much less fear or scruple to fall upon one of equal size belonging to private individuals.

#### TO MAPLE RIVER.

The next morning, July 10, was cool and foggy, and between four and five o'clock we could distinctly descry across the broad expanse of prairie to the westward a line of timber, which our guide informed us marked the course of Maple river about eighteen (18) miles distant, and through this *mirage* he even selected the point where we were to cross that stream. At six o'clock we broke camp and were soon on our way, making a course as straight as an arrow, over a fine, fertile, level prairie, but when the sun had dispelled the mists of the morning the timber ahead of us disappeared from sight, as if it had only been painted on the fog and disappeared with it.

We found neither wood nor water until we reached Maple river, which our odometer showed to be seventeen and a half (17½) miles from our last night's camp, but at our camp on the right bank of this stream we had excellent grazing, and wood and water in abundance. Maple river flows here in a north-eastwardly course, is at this point about twenty-five (25) feet wide, two (2) feet deep, with sandy bottom and well timbered banks. The water is evidently at its lowest stage, but must be of much greater volume in the spring, from the signs of extensive overflow. The next morning we took on wood enough for three days, and our course was over a level prairie for eight (8) miles, and then the country became rolling, with high bluffs on the banks of a branch of Maple river, which we crossed during the day. On July 12th we again crossed Maple river, but it has no timber on its banks, and its bottom is so muddy that we made a floating bridge of rushes to facilitate our crossing. After passing this point the land was marshy for a few miles, but not enough so to seriously impede our progress.



## GAME.

On two days previous we had caught sight of a few elk, so wild, however, as to prevent our getting a good shot at them, and we were now on the *qui vive* for some more approachable species of game wherewith to garnish our table, as fresh meat would be a most acceptable addition to our larder. We did not long look in vain, for Bottineau, keen-sighted as the wild denizens of this region themselves, espied four buffalo bulls about four miles from our train this afternoon, and he and Captain Fisk were soon in pursuit. The frightened kings of the prairie, when their hunters approached within half a mile, started off, as is their custom, against the wind, at a speed which required a good horse to overcome.

## THE FIRST CHASE.

But their pursuers soon began to gain upon them, and they showed signs of flagging after a chase of three or four miles. Then Bottineau, mounted on a trained buffalo-hunter from Pembina, put spurs to his good Major, and a few minutes of his best speed brought him along the right side of the object of his pursuit, when he levelled his piece as quick as thought, and, having sent a ball into the region of the heart, wheeled off to a respectful distance to avoid the desperate lunge which a wounded buffalo bull seldom fails to make. So close was Bottineau when he shot, probably within a dozen feet, that he had not failed to send the ball to the fatal spot, just behind the shoulder. The huge and maddened monster, weighing about eighteen hundred (1,800) pounds, shook his shaggy head, crowned with horns of most formidable strength, stood at bay, his eyes darting savage and defiant looks at his human foe, but soon the blood began to spout from his mouth, and to choke him as it came.

Bottineau did not shoot again, but waited patiently until his victim grew weak from loss of blood, staggered, fell upon his knees, made one desperate effort to regain his feet and get at his slayer, then fell once more upon his knees, rolled over on his side and died. All this took but a few minutes, and then they started in pursuit of another buffalo which had become separated from the other three; and Captain Fish, profiting by the example he had just witnessed, soon brought down his victim, which would probably weigh fourteen hundred (1,400) pounds, and was younger and tenderer than the first. Dr. Dibb meanwhile had started in pursuit of another of the four which had at first been together, and, after a chase of many miles, his horse being untrained and frightened whenever urged to approach near to his game, he returned to camp late at night with the bushy tail tip, which is the usual trophy shown as evidence of success in the buffalo chase. After our train had camped near a pond where good grass and water (but no wood) were at hand, fifteen and a half (15½) miles from last camp, two wagons were despatched to bring in as much of the two buffaloes first killed as would feast our whole train for a couple of days at least. From this time, until our arrival at the last crossing of Milk river, within a few days of Fort Benton, we saw herds of buffalo along our route almost every day, and our table was scarcely a day without an abundance of fresh buffalo meat, which was preferred by nearly all of us even to the deer and antelope, which, especially the latter, were quite abundant along a considerable portion of our journey east of the mountains. Our *cuisine* along this part of our journey almost constantly included wild ducks, geese, and several other varieties of the feathered tribes, which inhabit the numerous small lakes, heretofore so undisturbed in their solitude by our aggressive race.



## THE SABBATH.

July 13 being Sunday, we remained in camp, Captain Fisk having decided not to travel on Sundays unless in case of extreme urgency, in which decision there appeared to be a unanimous concurrence on the part of the emigrants; and it was also generally desired and understood that on these days we should have religious services in camp. In accordance with this desire and understanding, the members of the train gathered at headquarters in the morning and joined in observing the day according to the Episcopal form of worship, Mr. Langford, though a layman, officiating in lieu of a clergyman. It was resolved to continue this becoming observance of the day during the whole of our journey, and the resolution was made good, except on one or two Sundays, when peculiar circumstances prevented.

## A LANDMARK, BUFFALO, ETC.

July 14 we broke camp at half past six (6½) o'clock, the day being cool, cloudy, and favorable for travelling. Our route lay over rolling prairie, interspersed with extensive tracts of marsh, which, however, we easily avoided crossing. In five or six miles we came to a high, broken ridge, stretching nearly in a north and south direction, with a prominent peak just at the right of our course, which several of our party ascended, and which we called Bottineau Butte, or "Mount Bottineau," after our guide, who hailed it as a landmark which he well recollected. As we ascended this ridge we came in sight of large herds of buffalo, quietly feeding upon the bunch or buffalo grass, which they prefer to all other kinds. These animals are short-sighted, and scent the approach of an enemy before they can see him, and then in their curiosity often start to meet him, until they approach near enough to ascertain to their satisfaction whether there be danger in a closer acquaintance. In our case they decided this question in the affirmative, and, when they had once fairly made us out, lost no time in increasing the distance between us, starting on a slow, clumsy trot, which was soon quickened to a gait that generally left most pursuers far in the rear. We probably saw as many as five thousand (5,000) today, which was a small number according to our subsequent experience.

## SECOND CROSSING OF THE SHAYENNE.

From this ridge we descended to a low plain, abounding in saline and fresh-water lakes and patches of marsh, and at twenty and a half (20½) miles from last night's camp arrived again at the Shaienne, which we crossed, and then made our camp upon its west bank. This river is here about seventy (70) feet wide and two (2) feet deep, with good, gravelly bottom, and is easily approached and forded. Its banks are well timbered, and a finer camping place could not be desired than that which we selected on the edge of the timber, with excellent wood, water, and grass in abundance. Back from our camp some half a mile the bluffs rose to the height of three hundred (300) or four hundred (400) feet, and looked a formidable barrier to our progress on the morrow, but we easily found a circuitous pathway to the high plateau above, which our wagons were able to pursue with only slight difficulty. We here took on wood for two days, as there is none between the Shaienne and Lake Jessie.

## A WEDDING.

At this camp occurred an incident which served to break the monotony of camp life, and to consecrate the spot in the memories of at least two of our party of emigrants. A young couple had been observed, early in our journey, to evince a strong and growing affection for each other, and, with the consent

of the young lady's relatives, who were in the train, determined to celebrate their nuptials with all the forms and solemnities that the absence of municipal organization would permit. So after the evening meal, with the moon shedding a bright, chaste light over the scene, the young couple, in the presence of all the members of our train, pledged their troth to live together as husband and wife, "until death them should part," and the forms of the Episcopal marriage service, which were read by one of our party, were used upon the occasion. The congratulations and good wishes of friends followed, and then a dance upon the green sward to the music of violin, closed the ceremonies of this wedding on the plains.

#### LAKE JESSIE.

From this point to Lake Jessie, a distance of thirty-three and a half ( $33\frac{1}{2}$ ) miles, our route lay over a rolling, somewhat broken prairie, interspersed with small lakes and marshy tracts of land, the latter becoming more extensive as we approached the lake, rendering it necessary for our guide to ride ahead and select a passage for our wagons. Arriving at Lake Jessie, we camped between that lake and one half a mile to the south, about a mile in diameter, which Captain Fisk named Lake Lydia, in honor of his wife. Lake Jessie is a beautiful sheet of water, five or six miles in circumference, surrounded by a belt of timber. Its waters, as also those of Lake Lydia, are strongly impregnated with salt; but we discovered a spring a little less than a mile to the westward, which, after being improved by a few moments' digging, yielded us pure cold water for culinary purposes. We saw, on a high bluff, clear of timber, on the east shore of the lake, half a mile from our camp, some few traces of the camp of Governor Stevens, in 1853, the first which we have observed on our route. The grass is very abundant here, and is fresh in consequence of gentle showers, which we have recently had. We saw large herds of buffalo after leaving the Shayenne, and selected a fat cow for our larder, and our experience of the superiority of this meat over the buffalo bull will prove the death-warrant of many of the former and the further lease of life to many of the latter. At Lake Jessie we took on wood for several days and filled our casks with water from the spring, as we expected the water, for some distance ahead, to be brackish and unpalatable. We named our camp at Lake Jessie "Camp Aldrich," in honor of one of Minnesota's representatives in Congress. The next two days' travel of thirty-one and a half ( $31\frac{1}{2}$ ) miles was over a rolling prairie, intersected by lakes and sloughs, the higher ground showing signs of drought, which compelled us to seek grass for our stock on the lowest land. At twenty-one and a half ( $21\frac{1}{2}$ ) miles from Lake Jessie we came to a very beautiful lake, almost perfectly round, and some mile and a half in diameter, with clear water, and low, white, sandy beach, and Captain Fisk named it "*Lake Townsend*," in honor of the assistant adjutant general of the United States. We tarried on the shore of this lake to lunch and graze our stock, and then made ten (10) miles more, before making camp, on the 18th July, at a spot which Bottineau says is five miles north of the route of Governor Stevens, on July 13, 1853.

#### HEAD OF RIVER JACQUES.

July 19.—Breaking camp at half past six, we pursued a course a few degrees north of west, over dry prairie, with occasional ponds, and at  $10\frac{1}{2}$  o'clock struck the James river, which pursues a general southeast course and empties into the Missouri, we having passed the divide between the headwaters of the tributaries of the Red River of the North and those of the Missouri, so far as those tributaries have their rise east of the great Côteau du Missouri.

James river is devoid of timber or brush; has now very little current, and seems but a series of small, narrow ponds of water, communicating with each other. The neighboring country, except in the hollows, is considerably dry and parched by the drought. The day has been exceedingly hot, and we stopped an hour at this point to allow our stock to graze and refresh themselves with the waters of the James river. Our course during the rest of the day was over a dry and rolling country, and at night we camped by a lake, with good grass and passable water, having made nineteen (19) miles.

We did not take on wood enough at Lake Jessie to last us until we find timber again, which will be at "Bass Wood island," a high plateau, surrounded by level prairie—not water—which has small clumps of trees in the ravines which lead up to it, and which is about forty miles west of our camp to-night. But wood is not essential for camping purposes so long as the substitute in the form of buffalo chips (dried manure) remains as plentiful as at present. All along our route, for the last three or four days, this species of fuel has covered the ground in such abundance that more than five minutes' time was never required to collect a sufficient quantity for the use of our whole train for camping purposes. It burns very much like peat; lights easily, and answers so well the purpose of wood that we used it for many days rather than load our wagons more heavily by carrying wood along with us.

*July 20.*—This being Sunday, we remained in camp. In the forenoon we had heavy showers of rain, accompanied by thunder and lightning, and by such a gale of wind as to keep us in trepidation lest our tents should blow down; but, by dint of constant watchfulness and care, escaped such accident. In the afternoon religious services were held at our headquarters and well attended.

*July 21.*—Our route to-day has been over rolling prairie, thickly intersected by small ponds and sloughs. At noon we lunched, and grazed our stock at a beautiful lake, but whose waters were saline and unpalatable. Just as our train got under way, after lunch, we saw a herd of four thousand (4,000) or five thousand (5,000) buffalo coming at a run directly towards the lake by which we were driving. Three or four of us rode out towards them, and turning them a little from their course they undertook to cross our path, at right angles, less than a quarter of a mile ahead of our train. At full speed they hurried on, crowding each other in their headlong career, raising a huge cloud of dust, and causing the solid earth to resound under their feet. This huge mass of flesh was now between us and a large lake not more than two hundred (200) feet beyond.

#### UNHORSED.

Just at this time Bottineau gave rein to his good horse, Major, riding at full speed directly at the left flank of the herd, which, at his approach, gradually gave ground, edging off towards the lake, until those nearest to it were splashing through its shallow waters. He designed killing a cow in sight of the train—some of our party not yet having seen a buffalo killed—but just as he had selected as his victim the fattest cow which he could see, and was in the act of raising his gun to shoot, his horse stepped with both fore-feet into a wolf-hole on the side of a steep pitch which he was descending, and fell headlong upon the top of his rider. I was, at the moment, riding close to Bottineau, and an instant after his fall the same mishap befel me; but I escaped without the same injury. Bottineau was insensible for some time after his fall, and we feared he might be seriously injured. We placed him in our flag-wagon, and he suffered severely from his fall for several days, but was able to ride his horse and perform his duties as guide the next day after the accident. Such falls are not unfrequent among the Red River hunters, as the ground is often full of badger, fox, and wolf-holes, and sometimes these falls occur while riding in the

very midst of a large herd of buffalo, where it is almost impossible to escape being trampled on and killed.

#### BUTTE DE MORALE.

*July 22.*—At noon to-day we arrived at the base of the Butte de Morale, a high hill rising out of a comparatively level prairie around it, and which is a well-known landmark to Indians and Red River hunters, and derives its name from the fact that a half-breed by the name of Morale was killed in this neighborhood by a Sioux. Just as we approached this hill we saw the tracks of the Red River train, which had probably passed within two weeks. There were four distinct trails, running parallel to each other, and but a rod or two apart. These hunters make these excursions in very large parties, and divide their train into this number of lines in order to keep closer together, and to form themselves more quickly into a camp for defence in case of an attack by the Indians.

#### THE HUNT.

They make two hunts every year, a spring hunt for the purpose of obtaining meat, and a fall hunt for buffalo robes, which are then thick and warm, while in the spring the hair is all shed, except on the head and shoulders. They start from Pembina for the spring hunt about the middle of June, in trains comprising sometimes as many as three thousand (3,000) carts, taking their wives and children with them, to assist in preparing the pemmican, which is to serve for their principal food during the rest of the year, and each hunter having at least one horse, which he keeps fresh until they arrive in the buffalo region. They cross the country to the Missouri river, and then return. An ox is harnessed into each cart, which is made in the most rude but solid manner, without tires or a particle of iron in its composition. In this spring hunt the meat is dried, pounded up with all the fat and tallow in it, and then sewed up in the skins, which are afterwards used and dressed for tent or lodge skins, moccasins, &c. A Red River hunter who was with the train which had passed the Butte de Morale, and whom I afterwards saw, told me that this year they killed on one afternoon out of one herd near this butte eleven hundred (1,100) buffalo. The fall hunt starts about the middle of October, and then the robes are the principal object. Formerly the Hudson Bay Company sent its hunters into this region, as into the northern part of our territory further west, but I do not think it does so now, as the hunters in the northern part of Minnesota now carry on an extensive business in this line on their own hook, carrying their robes and some of their pemmican to St. Paul, where they find plenty of competition for their purchase.

#### THE NEW PASS.

After passing the Butte de Morale the prairie became more level than for some days previous, until we came to a sudden rise of land, stretching to the northwest and southeast, and looking like a serious obstacle to our further progress, which Bottineau says is a portion of the Côteau des Prairies. As we approached this elevation, which in the distance looked like a shore to the ocean of prairie over which we were travelling, we discovered a good and easy pass leading into or rather through it. Entering this pass between high peaks on either hand, the road was smooth and excellent, although in the wet season it would, perhaps, be too soft and marshy to admit the passage of heavily-loaded wagons. This pass led us to what I have alluded to as Bass Wood island, and we found a small growth of timber in the coulées leading into this pass, the first wood which we have had since leaving Lake Jessie. Bottineau says that Governor Stevens did not discover this pass, but took a route of considerable diffi-

culty through this high, broken region a few miles to the south of it. We pursued a westerly direction up this pass for three miles, and made our camp near a lake which afforded passable water and good wood and grass, calling our camp "Camp Lincoln." As our train was entering this pass I climbed to the top of a peak some hundred (100) feet high, which stands just inside its entrance, and sat watching the approach of the long line of wagons, with their white tops, resembling vessels in the distance, and appropriately called "prairie schooners." Just then a light shower occurred, but was soon succeeded by the sun and a rainbow which spanned the heavens, and seemed to form an arch to this pass, under which the train came slowly along. The sight was a beautiful one, and I gazed on the scene until the last wagon had passed, and then I closed up the rear.

*July 23.*—This forenoon we travelled about three miles in the pass in which we camped last night, and then gradually ascended to a high rolling prairie, the lakes along our route being strongly saline. In the afternoon the country is more level, and we find a good camp by a small pond at an early hour, on account of several oxen in our train having become quite lame, having contracted the hoof-ail, it is thought. We see this evening a large cloud of smoke rising some six or eight miles to the southwest, which must indicate the presence of Indians or Red River hunters.

#### ON WATCH.

Some of our party report having seen four Indians in the distance this afternoon, and it is decided to use to-night more than our ordinary precautions against the possibility of any of our stock being stolen. I was sergeant of the guard, and doubled our sentinels, placing five men as an outer or picket guard at a distance of two hundred (200) yards from camp, while a guard watched close to our wagons and among our horses, which were picketed within twenty (20) or thirty (30) feet of our tents. There was the most beautiful display of the aurora borealis at about midnight that I ever witnessed. First there appeared in the east a luminous body much resembling a large comet, with the nucleus near the horizon, and the tail in a direct line towards the zenith. Then appeared a precisely similar phenomenon in the west, and these two lights kept gradually approaching each other until their tails met and blended so as to form a complete arch from the eastern to the western horizon, directly across the zenith. This lasted, without any material change, for near an hour, when it began to grow dim, the centre passed southward, and then the whole disappeared.

#### SERENADE AT CAMP HALLECK.

Wolves in large numbers have for several nights surrounded our camp and kept up the most dismal howling and barking, prairie dogs and foxes probably joining in the chorus. To night their noise was constant and loud—indiscribably dismal—varying its expression from the crying of human beings to the fierce and savage yells of the red man infuriated by the taste of blood. This camp we named "Halleck," in honor of the successful commander of our armies in the west.

#### CROSS WINTERING RIVER.

*July 24.*—The day has been oppressively hot, and our stock has shown signs of intense suffering, both on account of the heat and of their lameness, which we think is caused by the blue clay through which they have travelled in the low, marshy land, and which seems to poison their feet. After travelling five or six miles over a very uneven country we came to Wintering river, a branch of Mouse river, and found an unexpected obstacle to our progress. At a distance the

river looks very insignificant, but we find it to vary from seventy-five (75) to two hundred (200) feet in width. Its surface is mostly covered with tall, heavy bulrushes, and has a scarcely perceptible current. Its depth varies from three (3) to six (6) feet, with over a foot of heavy clay mud at the bottom, rendering it difficult for our cattle to get over, even when turned loose and relieved of their loads. Our guide rode off down the stream in search of a practicable fording place, and we, meanwhile, turned out our stock to be feeding. After waiting nearly an hour for Bottineau's return, Captain Fisk determined to cross where we were, and the men were soon at work mowing rushes, which others carried out into the stream, placing them across from side to side to make a wagon way. A great many tons were soon thus disposed of, every man, including the captain and his assistants, wading in the water more than waist deep for the purpose. A line of men was placed each side of this causeway to hold it in its place; the cattle were first driven over; long ropes were attached to the wagons, which were then one by one drawn over by a motive power of seventy (70) or eighty (80) strong men, until oxen could be hitched to the load upon the other side. As each wagon was thus drawn over it would sink to the bed and so drag and displace the rushes that they would have to be rearranged and new ones added. When the wagons were about half drawn over, Bottineau returned and reported that he had found a good fording place some eight (8) miles below, where the stream was not more than two (2) feet deep, with hard, solid bottom. But we kept on crossing where we were, and by half-past four o'clock our train was all over. One of our mules, however, was drowned in trying to cross, in spite of every aid which could be rendered him. We then proceeded three (3) miles further and camped with tolerable slough water, excellent grass, and an abundance of buffalo chips for fuel, having made eleven (11) miles to-day. We named this camp "Camp Union."

#### SIGHT OF MOUSE RIVER.

*July 25.*—The first half of this day's journey lay over a level prairie, but the country was rolling in the afternoon, with fresher grass than we have seen for several days, indicating recent rains. We saw this afternoon the same number of Red River trails that we had noticed near the Butte de Morale, indicating that the hunters had passed this way on their return northward from the Missouri, and I now have no doubt that the smoke which we saw day before yesterday proceeded from their encampment or from a prairie fire which had been accidentally set by them, and the scarcity of buffalo which we have noticed for the last two days is also accounted for by their so recent presence in this region. We find large numbers of buffalo carcasses scattered over the country to-day, which bear evidence of having but recently been slain, although little else than the bones have been left by the hunters in the first instance, and those gleaners, the wolves, afterwards. After making a march of seventeen (17) miles we made haste to camp, on account of a heavy thunder shower which threatened, and which burst upon us as soon as we had pitched our tents and secured dry buffalo chips for fuel, good grass and water being close at hand. Our camp is about a mile and a half south of Mouse river, the high banks of which, and the line of timber marking its course, the eye can readily trace. Some of our party rode down to the river before camping, and report it to be heavily timbered with cottonwood, oak, and ash, thirty (30) or forty (40) feet wide, from two (2) to eight (8) feet deep, with high, steep banks, and numerous coulees making into it.

*July 26.*—We crossed several coulees to-day making into Mouse river, with small streams of water running through them, and clusters of small trees along their sides. After making eleven (11) miles we arrived at the edge of a coulée, larger than previously crossed, and with a greater supply of wood and water, and excellent grazing in its bottom. As to-morrow is Sunday, and we



have been so long without wood, as well as on account of the lameness of several of our oxen, which need "doctoring," Captain Fisk determined to camp here until Monday. After dinner the women, acting on the adage "make hay while the sun shines," had kettles and wash-tubs down in a shady nook by the stream and were soon deeply immersed in suds and all the rites and mysteries of washing-day, while afterwards (for their sakes I will not disclose whether to-day or to-morrow) followed the process of bread-making in sufficient quantities to last several days, as wood is a luxury which they have learned by deprivation to appreciate. As our leisure from travel has caused us all to think and speculate upon the progress of the war, we named this "Camp Stanton," in honor of the Secretary of War. One of our party rode out this afternoon and killed a buffalo, in order that our whole train might be supplied with fresh meat to-morrow.

*July 27.*—We remained in camp to-day and held religious services at headquarters, using a special prayer for our beloved country and for divine protection over those who have gone forth to offer their lives upon the altar of her sacred cause.

*July 28.*—This forenoon our route lay across several coulees, and the crossing of them proved the most difficult part of our journey thus far, except the crossing of the Shayenne and Wintering rivers. In the afternoon, however, we proceeded over a high, level plateau, forming an excellent road, and covered with rich grass. After making sixteen and a-half ( $16\frac{1}{2}$ ) miles we camped near a small lake of pure water. In some of the coulees which we crossed this morning we found considerable timber and picked ripe raspberries and gooseberries. There were also wild plums, which were not yet ripe. After emerging from one of these coulees, Bottineau and Captain Fisk, being in advance of the train, discovered a grizzly bear about half a mile from them, and started at once on horseback in pursuit. Others joined in the chase, and they soon succeeded in wounding him, when he at once turned, and, for a short distance, became the aggressive party. The bear was finally killed after receiving fully a dozen balls, and it proved to be a young female, weighing about six hundred (600) pounds. The skin and quarters were brought to camp and the meat was most excellent. These bears are hard to kill, and the Indians seldom venture to hunt them alone for fear of accidents. One of them will kill a full-grown buffalo by seizing him by the head and breaking his neck. Bottineau relates an instance witnessed by himself where a large grizzly bear killed three buffaloes in immediate succession, but the last of the three, after he had received his death wound, struck bruin a blow with his horns which proved fatal, and they both died nearly together.

*July 29.*—We made fifteen and three-fourths ( $15\frac{3}{4}$ ) miles to-day, our route lying for the most part over a level prairie, as hard and smooth as any ordinary travelled road. During the forenoon, however, we crossed several coulees, one of which had deep, steep banks, with a small amount of stagnant, alkaline water at the bottom. In striving to ascend the bank out of this coulee, one of the emigrant wagons upset, spilling its varied contents promiscuously upon the ground, and breaking many articles, but not seriously injuring the wagon. The load was hastily thrown together, and the wagon overtook us before dark. The prairie at our camp is parched for want of rain, and both grass and water are poor, and there is no wood. We named this "Camp Windom," in honor of one of Minnesota's representatives in Congress.

*July 30.*—Our course to-day has been nearly northwest between Mouse river (or rather a branch of that stream, "Riviere des Lacs,") on the right and the Côteau du Missouri, which rises to the south and west like a distant coast seen at sea. The ground has been rising rapidly as we approach the Côteau, and yet that marked formation rises distinctly and boldly above the plateau we are now on like a terrace. After making twenty and a half ( $20\frac{1}{2}$ ) miles, we camped

on high ground, close by a lake, with good water and grazing. The Riviere des Lacs runs about a mile to our right, in a general easterly direction, with high, steep banks, and small clumps of trees marking its course.

The *Côteau du Missouri* is a plateau or elevation of land some three hundred (300) or four hundred (400) feet above the surrounding country, being broken up within itself into small conical hills and corresponding valleys, in which are found numerous small lakes and good pasturage. This elevation stretches along the north side of the Missouri river, in a southeasterly and northwesterly direction, and forms the divide between the tributaries of the Missouri and that system of waters which flow northward, through British America, and find an outlet in Hudson's bay. This coteau has a general width of about thirty-five (35) miles, and wagons can wind their way through its series of hills at almost any place, while the valley of the Riviere des Lacs, running along its northern edge, affords the easiest pathway across or rather around it.

#### AN ENTHUSIASTIC HUNTER.

When our train set out this morning, Dr. Dibb, Mr. Burritt, and myself struck off together towards the south on a short hunting excursion, intending to join the train before night, whose course we supposed would be due west. Before we had gone a mile to the south we found the country so abruptly broken into hills and valleys as to be almost, if not quite, impassable by wagons, and the doctor soon strayed off alone in his eager hunt after game. At noon a heavy thunder shower broke upon us, and Mr. Burritt and myself started in a northwesterly course to strike the trail of our train. Not striking it as soon as we anticipated, we kept more to the north, and at length struck it and followed it into camp, where we arrived just at dark. We then found that Bottineau had, with his usual skill, led it well towards Mouse river, and thus found an excellent road, whereas a mile to the southward the country was impracticable for wagons. The night was windy, rainy, and cold, but the doctor did not come to camp, and we fired our howitzer and fixed lanterns on the highest points near camp, in order to render him all the assistance that we could to find his way, if he was lost near enough to be thus assisted.

*July 31.*—The doctor did not return last night, and by daylight four horsemen were sent out to scour the country as well as they could, and try to find at least some traces of him, for we feared he had met hostile Indians, or perhaps been injured or killed in an encounter with a buffalo or bear. The scouts returned at eight (8) o'clock without meeting with any success, and a party of fifteen (15) horsemen was immediately organized and despatched to make a more thorough effort. We each took with us a haversack of provisions for his supper and breakfast, in case we should be separated when we found him, and met on a high hill near our camp as a starting point. Just as we were separating, Bottineau descried with a glass a black speck in the horizon, which he concluded to be a man, and after a few minutes, during which the object drew nearer, he exultantly shouted, "Hurrah! it's the Doctor!" We all then rode to meet him, and in a few minutes fifteen haversacks of bread and buffalo tongue were offered to the returned wanderer, and while he did ample justice to such portion of it as he could, he related, in his own humorous manner, his brief experience as a "solitary horseman."

I will not repeat his story, but he had been lured a long distance out of his way by a couple of white cranes, the prospect of getting a shot at which proved a temptation that no one who knows him would expect him to resist, even in view of a penalty ten times as severe as in this case it proved to be. He finally got a shot at them, and killed both with a single ball from his rifle. Then night, a cold, rainy, blustering night came on, and being no longer able to see his way, he had to compose himself to his fate and wait for daylight. The first call on

his ingenuity in his new situation was to kindle a fire. Having no matches or flint with him, he rubbed some powder in a dry rag, and ignited that by discharging the contents of his gun into it. In the course of half an hour he managed thus to have a camp fire, by means of which a supper of broiled crane-meat was prepared, and the wings of those birds he converted into use by hanging them upon his shoulders to shelter his person from the storm. He picketed his horse to his saddle, and tried to sleep, but with the most indifferent success, the rain, cold, and a pack of wolves which surrounded his camp and kept up a most dismal howling, at hardly respectful distance, not being calculated to produce a very soothing effect. He was forced, therefore, to keep his cold, wet vigils until morning, when he cooked a hasty repast similar to his supper, and, prudently fastening the remaining portion of the cranes to his saddle, sallied forth to find the train, and had struck and was following its trail when discovered by us. Before starting this morning we observed a trail coming from the direction of Mouse river, and passing about a mile beyond our camp south-westerly into the coteau. We readily decided this to be the trail of the party of emigrants who, as I have mentioned, had started from Minnesota about a month in advance of us, and proceeded by way of Pembina and St. Joseph. In former times there was considerable travel and communication between the settlement at Pembina and Fort Union by the Red River hunters; but this has been mostly, if not quite, abandoned at the present time, and no other trail is visible across this country than that made as above stated. Bottineau decided to follow this trail, as he understood that the party was guided by a person whom he knew to be as well acquainted as any one with the country lying between Fort Union and Pembina.

Captain Fisk started to guide the train, while Bottineau was with the party in search of Dr. Dibb, and, crossing the trail above mentioned without noticing it, kept up the general course of Mouse River valley until noon, when he made a halt. Bottineau then coming up turned the train almost directly southward, in order to strike the trail which we had passed, and succeeded in doing so at about 4 o'clock. He resolved to follow this trail, and we did so, much to our subsequent regret. After making eighteen and a half (18½) miles we camped near a lake of good water, and in the immediate vicinity of which was excellent grazing. The hills around us are gravelly and barren, but the valleys contain numerous small lakes and fair pasturage. Since we entered these hills forming the coteau we have constantly looked upon immense herds of buffalo in front and on either side. The Red River hunters on the east, and the Indians on the west, have hunted them until they have rushed to the cover of these hills as a retreat from the dangers that threaten them.

We must have seen, at least, one hundred thousand (100,000) this afternoon. Two or three were killed by our party, and a calf, about a week old, was captured and brought to camp. He will butt and kick any person who approaches him, evincing all the perversity and wildness which distinguishes the full-grown specimen of his species. At first he rejected all advances made by our cows towards an acquaintance and friendship; but, before long, his appetite conquered his prejudice, and he sucked one of them, though somewhat disdainfully and clumsily, and he was, by consequence, adopted as a member of our train. After it grew dark the large herds of these animals in the neighborhood of our camp kept up a low, suppressed, rumbling bellow, which resembled the distant roar of the sea; and we had to place a special line of sentinels to frighten them away from camp, lest they stampede our horses and mules, and possibly trample our whole camp in their headlong, irresistible course, should they, by any means, get once started in that direction.

*August 1.*—Our course to-day has been about northwest, and over the same character of country as yesterday. I should estimate that we have seen at least a million (1,000,000) buffaloes to-day, and twenty (20) or thirty (30) have

been killed by our party, as each man desires to kill one, and from the nature of the country they can be easily laid wait for behind the hills and killed by footmen. After making eighteen and a half (18½) miles we camped in a circular valley, near a small lake, with passable water and grass, but no wood.

*August 2.*—At noon to-day, having made ten (10) miles, we reached the western limit of the Côteau du Missouri. Its termination in this direction is very abrupt, and we descended the steep side of this singular formation and passed on at once to a low, level prairie, where we made our camp on the site of a large Assiniboine camp of last year, containing about one hundred and twenty (120) lodges. There is a deep coulée close by running up into the côteau, where we found a cold sulphur spring, small trees and bushes, and a considerable quantity of wild cherries, gooseberries, raspberries, and wild currants; but grass is scanty except in the marshes, a mile or so from camp. We named this "Camp Hamlin," in honor of the Vice-President of the United States.

#### NIGHT ALARM.

*August 3.*—Last night, at about twelve (12) o'clock, our guard discovered five or six Indians lurking about our lines, evidently watching for a chance to steal some of our horses. This was made known at headquarters, and two additional sentinels were placed on guard. In about an hour afterwards one of the sentinels saw the "red skins" still on the alert for an opportunity to make off with the first horse they could get at, but upon his firing his gun they fled most precipitately. Our whole camp was aroused by the discharge of the gun, and under arms in a few moments, but the causes of the alarm did not again make their appearance. We remained in camp to-day, (Sunday,) and it has been disagreeably cold and rainy.

#### INDIANS.

*August 5.*—Yesterday our route was over an excellent hard road, but the grass was scanty. To-day the road has been of a similar character. We saw near our route this forenoon many petrifications of trees, some of which are at least twelve (12) or fifteen (15) feet in circumference. At about ten (10) o'clock our guide saw at a distance what he took to be Indians, and, in company with Mr. Langford, rode out to meet them. Nine Indians of the Shayenne band of Assiniboines—an off-shoot of the Sioux—mounted and armed with guns, returned to the train with them, and discharged their pieces in the air in token of friendship, which was responded to by a discharge from our howitzer and the guns of the horsemen near the captain at the time of their approach. These Indians speak the Sioux language, and *Georgé Gero*, our Sioux interpreter, could converse with them without difficulty, although their language has undergone some changes since they became estranged from the main body of the nation to which they belong. They accompanied our train until we stopped at noon, when we gave our new guests a hearty meal of such provisions as we had for ourselves, and made them presents of various articles which we knew they would prize most highly. Their chief, *Bras Cassé*, as the French half-breeds have named him, appeared to be a very sedate and dignified Indian, and wanted to hold a council with Captain Fisk. This was of course granted, and he at once entered upon the wrongs which the white man was doing him and his tribe by travelling through his country without his permission first obtained, and driving away the buffalo, their only resource for raiment, shelter, and food. *Bras Cassé* demanded by what right we assumed to travel through his country. Captain Fisk told him that the Great Father at Washington had sent us; that we were friends to the Indian, and made him these presents in token of that friendship; that if he and any of his tribe came to travel through our country we should treat them as friends, and allow them to go wherever they choose. During this conversation

some of the Indians grew rather insolent in their conduct about our train, and we saw a considerable number coming from different directions towards us. Soon some thirty (30) or forty (40) of them had collected, and their head warrior superseded their civil chief as spokesman, and soon entered into a vociferous tirade against the wrongs which the white man was doing to his tribe by frightening away the buffalo from this part of the country. He made a fierce harangue, addressing it partly to us and partly to his warriors around him. Then he told us we must go no further on our journey, but return whence we came. Captain Fisk told him that we had been sent across this country, and across the mountains, and that we must perform the duties with which he had been charged; that there were more buffalo than the Indians could need or kill; but that if they suffered by reason of our passing through their country the Great Father at Washington would recompense them for it. But the head warrior would not listen to this complacently. He told us that he had one hundred (100) lodges a few miles to our right; that there were four hundred (400) lodges of the Assiniboines a few miles ahead of us, and the Yanctonais in large numbers were but a short distance to our left. He said they were all resolved that we should not proceed any further unless we paid very heavy tribute, and then asked us what we should do if they attacked our train. Captain Fisk told him that was a foolish question to ask a white man; that we were going forward as we had been ordered to do, and that he would learn what we would do if he tried to prevent our further progress. The bugle was then sounded, and every man in our train took his gun and his revolver so as to make a display of them. Some of the Indians threw the provisions we had given them on the ground and trampled them in the dirt. They stood in the way of our train when we wanted to start, but our wagon-master, an athletic "six-footer," thrust them aside, and the train started. Then the Indians became suddenly friendly and begged us to go and kill some buffalo for them, as their horses could not catch them as well as ours. We who were on horseback rode along with them to keep them from mingling with the train, and when we were about a mile ahead of the wagons Bottineau and his son rode out with them into a herd of buffalo, and in half an hour had slain ten (10) or eleven (11) fat cows for them. They stopped to dress them, taking all the meat and packing it on their horses, and then started for their camp, which was the last we saw of these querrulous guests.

*August 6.*—Our route to-day has been over a hard, dry, moderately rolling prairie, with plenty of water in lakes, but scanty grass. We have made twenty-two and one-fourth ( $22\frac{1}{4}$ ) miles, and have named our camp "Camp Wilkinson," in honor of one of the senators from Minnesota in the national Congress. Immense herds of buffalo have lined our route, and I cannot estimate the number seen to-day at less than one hundred and fifty thousand, (150,000.)

*August 7.*—The country along our route to-day has been exceedingly hilly, from which we judge we are not far from the Missouri, although our guide cannot recognize the country, and thinks we must have been misled by following the trail of the party in advance of us, which we struck at Mouse river. At noon we stopped in a dry, deep valley, which has every appearance of having been once the bed of a large stream. Here we shall remain until morning, as the family of one of the emigrants of our train is expected to be increased before we proceed further.

*August 8.*—A child was born in our camp last night, and has been added to our list of emigrants. Should this young pioneer become a character in the world's history, it occurs to me that it will puzzle his admirers and followers to point out his birthplace as much as it has exercised the competing cities which claim the "blind old man of Scio's rocky isle" to prove his true nativity. Mother and child were in such condition this morning as not to delay our march, and we proceeded over a bluffy country, making seventeen and a half ( $17\frac{1}{2}$ ) miles, and

camping near a small lake, with passable water, scanty grass, but no wood. We named our camp "Camp Ramsey," in honor of the governor of Minnesota.

#### FORT UNION.

*August 9.*—Our course to-day has been nearly due south, over a more rocky and broken country than any heretofore passed, with only a single cool spring along the route, and scanty grazing. After making nineteen (19) miles we camped by a small stream, (which proved to be the Little Muddy,) now dry, except where, at intervals, a few pools of water remain. Bottineau has now become satisfied that the trail which we have been following does not lead to Fort Union, as we expected, and thinks we are within five (5) or six (6) miles of the Missouri, and seven (7) or eight (8) miles above that post. We intend remaining several days at this camp, in order to allow an opportunity for making such repairs as the wear and tear of the long journey we have already made, as well as that yet before us, render necessary; and, besides, we must, if we can, find Fort Union, and there obtain some few provisions with which to eke out our scanty supply.

The distance from Fort Abercrombie to this point, as measured by our odometer, is four hundred and sixty-seven miles, making the average day's travel, excluding Sundays, a fraction over sixteen (16) miles. Our cattle are still in good condition, some of them having improved on the route, and we have not lost one animal, except the mule which stubbornly drowned himself in Wintering river.

*August 10.*—We remained in camp to-day, and at daylight Captain Fisk, accompanied by one of our party, started on horseback to find Fort Union. At five (5) o'clock p. m. they returned in the midst of a rain shower, and reported that they had visited Fort Union, which was about fifteen (15) miles below us. They then ascertained that the party in advance of us had passed this point some twenty-three (23) or twenty-four (24) days ago; that their guide, a French and Chippewa half-breed, had become frightened at what he took to be a Sioux camp, while they were in the Côteau du Missouri, and had ignominiously fled and deserted them in the night. They were then left without a guide, but soon hired an Indian to guide them as far as Fort Union, and provided him with a good horse to ride for that purpose. This was too strong a temptation for him to resist, and guide and horse suddenly disappeared and were not again seen. They then proceeded without guide and by consequence did not make the best and shortest possible course, and we have been following their trail on account of the reliance which Bottineau placed in their guide.

*August 11.*—Early this morning about twenty (20) of us on horseback and four or five in our lightest wagon went to Fort Union, which, it is well known, is a trading post belonging to Pierre Chouteau, jr., & Co., or, as it is generally styled, the American Fur Company. This fort stands close to the left bank of the Missouri river, which, at the present low stage, is about a half or three-fourths of a mile wide at this point, with a rapid current and very muddy water. There is no timber near the fort, on this side of the river, but a good growth of cottonwood extends along the opposite bank. The mouth of the Yellowstone is about three miles below. This post was established in 1830, and since that time has been the principal supply dépôt for the Assiniboiné and some other tribes of Indians. It is built in the form of a square fort, with log palisades about sixteen (16) feet high entirely surrounding it, and two bastions, one to the northeast and the other on the southwest corner. Inside is a large rectangular area or court, around which extends a line of buildings used as residences for the employés of the company, (nearly all of whom have Indian wives,) workshops, store, &c. The post is about three hundred feet square on the outside, and has an entrance gate on the north, and one on the south. The trade of this post has suffered much of late from the hostile and aggressive disposition of the



Sioux, who have so far trenched upon the territory of the tribes usually trading here as to render them afraid to come here any longer. About two weeks ago a party of Yankton Sioux came close to this post and at mid-day stole seventeen (17) horses. A friendly Indian chief and several white men started at once in pursuit, but the Indian was killed, and one of the whites severely wounded, in a short encounter which they had during their fruitless pursuit. Steamboats have run from St Louis to this post for thirty (30) years, bringing goods to trade with the Indians, and taking back buffalo robes, furs of many varieties and other articles obtained through Indian trade. Four steamboats of light draught have this year passed this point and reached Fort Benton, and Mr. Meldrum, the agent now in charge of this post, says there is never less than twenty-eight (28) inches of water in the channel between these two posts. Bottineau, his son and our Sioux interpreter left us here to go home by way of Pembina, as Mr. Meldrum volunteered to act as our guide and interpreter from this point to Fort Benton.

On the morning of the 12th we started again on our way, keeping up the valley of the Missouri, which presents a good natural wagon road. The banks of the river are so steep that we cannot drive our cattle down to drink, but are obliged to bring the water to them in buckets. The water along the route, for the first few days, other than that of the river, has been generally poor, and the grass dry and scanty, but we have now the luxury of wood for fuel, and shall continue to be supplied with it along our route until we reach Fort Benton. On the afternoon of the 13th we reached the banks of Big Muddy river, at a point about four (4) miles from its confluence with the Missouri. There is no timber on its banks, although we find plenty of drift wood for fuel, and as it is seventy (70) feet wide, four (4) feet deep, with muddy bottom, we cannot readily bridge the stream, nor ford it with our loaded wagons without damaging the loads.

#### CROSSING OF THE BIG MUDDY.

*August 14.*—This morning we unloaded all our wagons, placed five of them, one after the other, across the river, making a bridge of them with but a few inches of water in the wagon beds. Then the other wagons were hauled over by hand, and the loads carried over this bridge by the men, and the wagons reloaded on the other side. This was accomplished and the train ready to start by eleven (11) o'clock, and we then travelled five (5) miles and camped close to a new trading post which the American Fur Company is erecting on the site of one formerly occupied by Mr. ——— Larpeur, for the purpose of trading with such bands of Indians as find this point more convenient than Forts Union or Benton; and these are the Gros Ventres, Crows, and Assiniboines.

#### MILK RIVER.—THE CROW AND GROS VENTRES INDIANS.

*August 19.*—At the end of to-day's march we struck Milk river, and saw signs of the recent presence of large bodies of Indians, whose ponies had eaten the grass over a very large area in the neighborhood, yet we managed to find tolerable grazing and good wood and water.

In the evening half a dozen Gros Ventres Indians came to our camp from their camp, some twelve (12) miles distant on the Missouri, and remained with us over night.

*August 20.*—Early this morning thirty (30) or forty (40) Indians came to see the white man's camp, and as we were to remain most of the day at this place, for the purpose of shoeing cattle, Captain Fisk and myself rode over to a small trading post on the Missouri, some fourteen (14) miles distant, near which we learned the Indians were encamped, and on our way thither we met the Indian village on the move, with all their horses, furniture, &c., to the

neighborhood of our camp, to gratify their curiosity, having learned that white men were travelling through their territory. Crows and Gros Ventres were moving together, and I could only distinguish them apart by the manner in which they carried their various articles of furniture, or, in other words, their household goods. The Crows belong across the Missouri, between that and the Yellowstone, a rough, mountainous country, while the Gros Ventres inhabit the country immediately north of the Missouri, the valley of Milk river being their favorite haunt. These latter Indians, when travelling with their effects, attach the ends of their tent poles to the saddle of the horse, allowing the other ends to spread out and drag behind, placing across them, just above the ground, a kind of box or basket, called a *trevine*, in which they place their baggage, and often their papooses and their sick, while the squaws ride the horses. The roughness of the Crow country renders this mode of transportation impracticable, and they drag their lodge poles in a similar manner, but dispense with the *trevine*, and pack their goods on the backs of their horses, which sometimes stagger under an astonishing amount of baggage, with a squaw surmounting it all. These two tribes are now not only at peace but living together almost indiscriminately in the Gros Ventres country, where buffalo and other game is more plentiful than in the region south of the Missouri, and where there is little danger of an incursion of the Sioux, who are the terror of all other Indians in this region, and have often invaded the territory of the Gros Ventres, near the Yellowstone. At the trading post we found several white men, and among the number Dr. J. R. C. Clark, who has been vaccinating the Indians along the valley of the Missouri, having been sent for that purpose by the government. He has won the respect of these Indians by his course of conduct, and persuaded many of them to submit to vaccination, against a prevailing prejudice among them.

At night we returned to camp and found these Indians, to the number of about two hundred, (200,) encamped close to our camp, and manifesting the most friendly disposition towards their white neighbors, their inordinate propensity for begging being the only annoyance which they occasioned us.

They own large numbers of horses, which constitute their chief riches. Star Robe, the wealthiest Indian among the Gros Ventres nation, was among our neighbors, and his dress, of which he was exceedingly vain, was in keeping with his reputation for riches. The chief articles traded to these Indians, at the post near here, are sugar, coffee, flour, tobacco, shot, lead, and some articles of jewelry, in exchange for which buffalo-robcs, furs, moccasins, &c., are received.

The price of a common buffalo-robe is three cups (pounds) of brown sugar; some of these robes, handsomely painted (according to the Indian standard) or wrought with porcupine quills, bring a double price. The Assinaboine Indians sacked this post last June, stripping it of everything it contained, and only sparing the trader's life upon the intervention of some friendly Crow Indians, who came and took him to their lodges for protection. I saw, not far from this trading post, in the woods near the banks of the Missouri, a cruel and most pitiable sight. An Indian squaw, loathsomely diseased, had been carried by her relatives a long distance from their camp, and there left to die of disease, hunger, and exposure. She was entirely naked, with the exception of a small piece of buffalo skin rudely thrown over her loins, and emaciated to a skeleton, with no one to give her a morsel of nourishment, or even a drink of water. When I saw her she appeared to be at the point of death. I was told by the whites at the post that her relatives had been about to throw her alive into the river, but they had prevailed upon them not to do so.

One Crow chief, whose hair is long and as white as snow, visited us at our headquarters this evening. He is called "White Head, the White Man's Friend," and deserves the latter portion of his appellation, I am satisfied, from what I saw and learned of his character. He carries at his saddle bow, in a sort of quiver attached thereto for the purpose, a roll, which he showed us with

evident pride and satisfaction. Upon unrolling a series of about a dozen layers of silk and calico, each tied carefully with ribbons and forming a sort of palimpsest, he at length reached the treasure so choicely guarded, and exhibited two painted banners, which had been presented to him at different times by the American Fur Company, testifying to their high appreciation of the constancy of his friendship for the white man and the good offices which he had performed for them. Mr. Meldrum has known him for twenty (20) years, and says he has never forfeited his title to the good name accorded to him by these testimonials.

*August 21.*—Travelled twenty (20) miles up the valley of Milk river, and have good wood and water, but only passable grass at our camp; but the grazing seems to be gradually improving as we advance. The Indians, who camped near us last night, travelled along in our company until noon, and then crossed the river and disappeared; but we came to an encampment of the Gros Ventres, who struck their lodges and travelled with and camped near us to-night.

*August 22.*—Travelled seventeen and a half ( $17\frac{1}{2}$ ) miles and camped on a branch of Milk river, with plenty of wood and water, but scanty grass, the ground being thickly covered with wild sage, as it has been for the last three days. Our Indian friends travelled with us to-day, and are again our neighbors to-night. These nomads of the prairie, when travelling and seen at a distance with their bright-colored dresses, feathers, and accoutrements, present a truly picturesque appearance, but there is certainly no irresistible charm in their habits or manner of living.

*August 23.*—Started at four (4) o'clock this morning in order to reach better grass as soon as possible. In four and a half ( $4\frac{1}{2}$ ) miles reached a point on Milk river at which we are to cross, and as we expect a long drive without water, according to the statement of "Old Dog's Head," an Indian warrior, who has drawn upon the ground a sketch of the country in this vicinity for our information, we remain here until towards evening, in order to afford our stock time to feed and to travel after the heat of the day. About one hundred and fifty (150) or two hundred (200) Indians still keep along with us, but are to leave us this evening.

At five (5) o'clock our train forded Milk river without much difficulty by placing branches of trees upon the bank, which is quite soft and muddy. The stream is here about two hundred (200) feet wide and one and a half ( $1\frac{1}{2}$ ) feet deep, with a quicksand bottom. We travelled until nine (9) o'clock, and were then compelled to make camp, as it became very dark and a slight rain set in. Just before halting, about twenty strange Indians rode up to our train in the darkness and occasioned some apprehensions among some of the emigrants, whose imaginations magnified the number many times. An alarm was given by some of them that our train was "cut in two," but all answered to the roll call, and the innocent causes of the alarm were soon demurely seated around a fire which they built close to our camp of buffalo chips and bones. We pitched a tent to protect them from the rain, but did not pitch any for ourselves on account of the rain and darkness, stowing ourselves in our wagons and under them for what sleep we could obtain.

*August 24.*—Started this morning at half past three, as our camp last night was without wood or water and almost without grass. At eighteen (18) miles from the crossing of Milk river we camped on the bank of that stream, with good water and wood and passable grass.

*August 25.*—Travelled eighteen and three-fourths ( $18\frac{3}{4}$ ) miles, and at an early hour, having started at four (4) o'clock, crossed Milk river again and camped on its bank, with good wood and water, but scanty grass. We came in sight of the Little Rocky mountains this afternoon, their dim and shadowy outlines resembling a thin body of clouds rising in the southwest.

*August 26.*—Travelled fifteen and a half ( $15\frac{1}{2}$ ) miles, and camped at Milk

river, with good wood, water, and grass. This forenoon we met two horsemen leading three pack horses, the first white travellers we have met since leaving Fort Abercrombie. They are from Salmon river, *en route* for Fort Union, and thence for "the States" by way of the Missouri river. They left Florence City six weeks ago, and report the Salmon River mines very rich, but the claims all taken up, and report but little gold in Deer Lodge and Bitter Root valleys.

*August 27.*—Remained in camp to-day on account of the abundance of grass, and to afford an opportunity for the emigrants to kill buffalo and dry the meat as a part of their winter's provisions. Succeeded in killing all the buffalo needed for that purpose, but do not expect to see many more, as we shall soon be so near Fort Benton that they will be driven away by the hunters and Indians from that post.

*August 28.*—Travelled twenty-one and three-quarters ( $21\frac{3}{4}$ ) miles to-day, and camped on Milk river, with abundance of wood, water, and grass. A war party of Crow Indians came to our camp early this morning and commenced their war-dance (having had success, probably, in stealing horses from some other tribe) as soon as we had started.

*August 29.*—Made eighteen and a half ( $18\frac{1}{2}$ ) miles, and camped on Milk river, with wood, water, and excellent grass. The Bear's Paw mountains appear to be about fifteen (15) or twenty (20) miles to the south and west, and three (3) emigrants have started on horseback to explore and prospect them for gold.

*August 30.*—Made seventeen and three-fourths ( $17\frac{3}{4}$ ) miles, and camped again on Milk river, with abundant wood, water, and grass. The country immediately out of the river valley, to the right of our course, is exceedingly broken, hilly, and barren. Our camp is in an opening amongst large cotton-wood trees, and is the pleasantest and most picturesque of any we have had since we left the Shayenne.

*August 31, (Sunday).*—We remained in camp to-day, and had religious services in a grove close by headquarters. The day has been exceedingly pleasant, and the temple in which we worshipped seemed far more fitting the grand and solemn service than any made by hands, however skillful in architecture.

#### MEDICINE LODGE.

*September 1.*—Made eighteen and a half ( $18\frac{1}{2}$ ) miles, and camped on Milk river, with excellent wood, water, and grass. We crossed Milk river to-day for the last time. The river bed at the point of crossing is about a hundred and twenty-five (125) feet wide and ten (10) feet deep, but is quite dry at this time. There is not here, nor has there been for the last hundred (100) miles, any running water in this river, except what runs underground through the quicksand which composes its bed, but water is found in pools at short intervals along the course of the river. We passed this afternoon an abandoned camp of some three thousand (3,000) or four thousand (4,000) Blackfeet Indians. A large "medicine lodge," in which they had celebrated their superstitious rites, was left standing, although its covering had been mostly stripped from its framework. It was circular, and about one hundred (100) feet in diameter and forty (40) feet high in the centre, the roof poles running from the top down to and resting upon strong poles, eight (8) feet high and fixed in the ground in a circle around a tree, which was erected for a centre pole. This, in time of occupancy, is covered with dressed buffalo skins, and constitutes the Indian's highest achievement in the architectural line. In the medicine lodge their mysteries and sacrifices are performed. The sun is their highest object of worship, but they also reverence the moon, which they call "the spirit of a woman." The chief end of these rites is to obtain the bestowment of great physical strength and fortitude that they may be successful in battle; rendering thanks for past

success and favors has a very subordinate place in their religion. They practice great self-torture as a part of their ceremonies; sometimes cutting off their fingers, sticking knives into their heads until they are covered with blood, with other mutilations of a like character.

Mr. Meldrum, who has spent over thirty (30) years among the Indians, says he once found in a medicine lodge a basket containing sixty (60) first joints of fingers, which they had cut from their own hands during the "making medicine," as they term it; and I have met an old mountaineer, who tells me he has seen them stick knives in their heads until the blood would follow every stab in jets.

Near this lodge we found a beautifully formed and spotted mare, still living, which they had cut in different parts of her body and then left as a sacrifice. They had also left in the lodge several worthless guns, some blankets, skins, moccasins, a scarf, an American flag, which had probably been presented to them by the American Fur Company, and a British flag, with the letters H. B. C. (Hudson Bay Company) on it.

*September 2.*—Our course to-day has been nearly south, and we have left Milk river to the north. Crossed Beaver creek, a small tributary of Milk river, which rises in the Bear's Paw mountains, which are now but a few miles to the southeast. We made nineteen and a half (19½) miles and camped on Box Elder creek, another small tributary of Milk river, having its source near the Missouri, with good wood, water, and grass.

*September 3.*—After travelling five (5) miles we came to a small stream or creek with small trees upon it, and as we do not expect to find any more wood until we reach Maria's river, we took on enough to last us two days. At nine and a half (9½) miles we came to a small creek called Big Sandy, and halted. The next twenty (20) miles from this point is over a high, rolling prairie, and we do not expect to find any water during that distance, unless we shall be agreeably disappointed, and find what is called "The Spring," not dry, as we fear it will be at this season. It is decided to travel a portion of this distance at night, so that our stock may suffer less from thirst than they would if compelled to travel the whole distance without water in the heat of the day.

#### A NIGHT MARCH.

We started from Big Sandy at about five (5) o'clock and travelled until midnight, when we came to the spring and camped, being happily disappointed in finding sufficient water for our stock, though not of excellent quality. We have made twenty-nine and a half (29½) miles to-day and to-night, but our stock does not appear to suffer from the drive, as the night is cool and moonlight, and the road excellent.

The Three Buttes or Sweet Grass mountains were plainly visible some sixty miles to the northwest. Different members of our train have seen six (6) grizzly bears to-day, and in two instances bruin gave chase, and for considerable distance tried his speed with their horses, the latter fortunately, but barely, winning the race.

"Our Doctor" and Mr. Burritt, while hunting along Box Elder creek, came suddenly upon a "grizzly," lying among some stunted willow bushes, which would weigh eight hundred (800) pounds. Just as they became aware of his close proximity he jumped up, roared, and sprang towards them in a most ugly, unfriendly manner. The doctor's horse (being a mule) turned quickly and ran as if she appreciated the emergency; but Mr. Burritt's horse was slow to understand the crisis, and could not be made to quicken his pace to the required degree until the bear was within six or eight feet of him. He then, however, obeyed the spur, and left old bruin in the background after a chase of a dozen rods, who sulkily started back into his cover, and could not be found when it came his turn to be pursued.

## MARIA'S AND TETON RIVERS.

*September 4.*—Made thirteen (13) miles to-day, and fording Maria's river, a fine, clear, mountain stream, flowing into the Missouri, camped on its right bank, with good wood, water, and grass. Our route to-day has been over a high, rolling country, and the descent into the valley of the Maria's is extremely steep, and we had to drive our teams down with great caution. The Teton empties into the Maria's a mile and a half above our camp. I rode on ahead to Fort Benton, nine (9) miles distant.

## FORT BENTON.

*September 5.*—Travelled nine (9) miles and camped in the valley of the Teton, three and a half ( $3\frac{1}{2}$ ) miles from Fort Benton, with good wood, grass, and water; every one in a high state of gratification at the safe and prosperous accomplishment of so much of their journey.

Fort Benton is a trading post of the American Fur Company, very similar in size and character to Fort Union, except that the walls are built of adobe, or unburnt brick, instead of wood. It is situated on the left bank of the Missouri, near the great bend, on a flat some three hundred (300) feet below the ridge which divides the Missouri from the Teton and Maria's rivers. Above the main fort, about half a mile, is another fort of like character, which was built by an opposition company, but afterwards purchased by the traders of Fort Benton; and about half a mile still further up the flat, a large fort or trading post is in process of being erected by the firm of La Barge, Harkness & Co., traders from St. Louis. Fort Benton was established in 1847, and a large trade has since then been conducted here with the Blackfeet and other Indians, ten thousand (10,000) of whom were encamped close to the walls of the fort but a few days before our arrival. In addition to this Indian trade, a considerable amount has been carried on this year with emigrants who have come up the Missouri to this point, on their way to the gold regions beyond the mountains. This fort is three hundred and sixty-seven (367) miles above Fort Union by the route travelled by us, and we have therefore made—seventeen and a half ( $17\frac{1}{2}$ ) miles a day, on an average, between these two points. Captain Fisk's instructions required him to disband the escort here, and the performance of this duty was the occasion of an interchange of sentiments of high regard between him and those forming the escort.

We remained here three days, and before starting, the emigrants unanimously requested Captain Fisk and his assistants to continue to act for the train, in the same manner and capacities as they had hitherto done, every one perceiving the benefits of preserving order and command in a party of this size travelling together. At this point commences the wagon road located and constructed by Lieutenant Mullan, under an appropriation of Congress, between here and Fort Walla-Walla. We started on this road on our journey, still further westward, on the ninth (9th) of September. As the mission for the especial accomplishment of which this expedition was sent forth ended at Fort Benton, I will not detail the subsequent progress or incidents of the journey, although they were full of interest to ourselves, the most so, perhaps, of any portion of our route. A few days out from Fort Benton we met four (4) men returning from a prospecting tour in the mountains, and they reported to us the discovery of gold in small quantities in the valley of the Prickly Pear river, a small tributary of the Missouri. At Sun river, on the 13th of September, six emigrants from our train started ahead to visit the Prickly Pear valley, and to report to us, upon our arrival in that vicinity, the prospect for mining and wintering there. At this point our camp was visited by "Little Dog," a chief of the Blackfeet, and quite a number of his warriors, who held an amicable talk with Captain Fisk, at our headquarters, and were feasted with the best our table afforded.



On the 20th of September we arrived at a point where the route to the Prickly Pear valley diverges from Mullan's road, and as our prospecting party had returned, we halted in order to hear their report, and allow the emigrants to determine upon their future course. The report of the prospecting party represented that the point where gold was discovered was about eighteen (18) miles southward from our camp; that it was found on the surface for miles in the Prickly Pear valley, in quantities varying from one-fourth of a cent to five or six cents to the pan, and that, if the stream were turned, and the bed-rock reached, they should hope to find it in paying quantities; that game and grass were abundant in the valley, and plenty of pine timber close at hand.

A meeting of the emigrants was held, and all of them, except about a dozen, were in favor of trying their fortunes at that point, thus allowing their cattle a rest much needed, and if they should not find gold in paying quantities, they could afterwards go to more promising regions. The next day they started for the scene of their experiment, Captain Fisk, some others of his assistants, and myself accompanying them.

We found the Prickly Pear to be a small stream fifteen (15) or twenty (20) feet wide, and two (2) feet deep. It flows in a northeasterly course, and the point where gold is known to exist is between two cañons about a mile apart. There is an out-cropping of quartz on either side of the stream, and there are boiling springs a few miles further up the valley. Before leaving the emigrants, they presented to Captain Fisk a letter, signed by every one of them and of the escort, testifying their satisfaction and gratitude at the manner in which he had conducted the expedition, and the kindness and assistance with which his conduct towards them had been marked.

#### GOOD-BYE TO EMIGRANTS.—CROSSING THE GREAT DIVIDE.

Having left the emigrants in the field of their new labors, and wished them success adequate to the hard work and deprivations which they will doubtless have to encounter in their efforts after the "root of all evil," we again resumed our journey on the 23d of September, crossed the main chain of the Rocky Mountains by the Hell Gate passes, and reached the Deer Lodge valley (where several gold mines are being wrought) on the 25th. This pass over the mountains, by Lieutenant Mullan's road, is perfectly practicable for wagons, and plenty of wood, water, and grass are found on the route.

It was hard to realize, when standing on this summit—so gradual has been the ascent—that we have reached the dividing point between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, and that the waters which we see trickling down from the mountain springs almost at our feet on the one side, go to swell the current of the "Father of waters," and thence empty into the Gulf of Mexico; while those we see forming a shallow brook, just below us to the west, find their way, by the great channel of the Columbia, into the Pacific. Leaving Deer Lodge, our course lay down the valley of the Hell Gate river, until October 8, when we crossed that stream, and commenced the ascent of the Cœur d'Alène mountains, by proceeding up the valley of the St. Regis de Borgia river, a small, clear, rapid mountain stream, out of which we supplied our table with delicious mountain trout. We found these mountains (the Cœur d'Alène) more difficult of passage than the main Rocky mountain chain, and for several days grass was extremely scanty. Immediately on crossing the summit by Stevens's pass, we commenced following down the valley of the Cœur d'Alène river, which takes its rise about half a mile from the source of the St. Regis de Borgia.

Following the course of this mountain stream, we passed through dense forests of cedar trees of immense size, some of them being fifteen (15) or sixteen (16) feet in diameter, and on October 13th we arrived at the Cœur d'Alène Mission, which was established by the Jesuits twenty years ago for the conver-

sion of the Indians. Leaving this point, we passed along the north shore of Cœur d'Alène lake, and kept down the valley of the Spokane river for two days, when we crossed that stream to the Pelouse, moved down that stream, and on the 27th October crossed Snake river by a ferry, and camped on its bank.

#### WALLA-WALLA.

On the 1st of November we reached Walla-Walla, a mining town of about three thousand (3,000) inhabitants, whose growth has been very rapid for the last two years, in consequence of the discovery of gold diggings at various points, which derive their supplies from this place. While we remained at Walla-Walla, there was a constant influx of miners to procure supplies, while large numbers were outfitting for the Powder river mines, which have been well tried and proved to be rich, and to the Boisé river mines, which have but just been discovered, but from which the reports are of the most flattering character.

Here Captain Fisk disposed of the stock and materials of the expedition, according to instructions, and proceeded, *via* the Columbia river to San Francisco, and thence by steamer to New York.

It does not properly belong to me to sum up, by way of review, the results of this expedition, but I cannot do less than say that the route over which we travelled is an eminently practicable one for the purpose of future emigration, more so, I have every reason to believe by what I have learned from those who have crossed the plains by the usually travelled route, than any other route across the continent. The health of our whole party was generally excellent during the voyage, the weather was most favorable, and no accident or loss of moment occurred to mar the good fortune which we all felt to attend the expedition. Since returning from the Pacific coast, I have learned, through various sources, that the emigrants whom we left in the mountains have met with greater success in their mining operations than they anticipated when we parted with them, and are still at work on the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains, with every prospect of still greater success in proportion as their mining claims shall become developed.

I cannot doubt that the greater portion of future emigration from the northwest to the gold fields on both slopes of the Rocky Mountains, the extent and richness of which are yet but little known, and hardly imagined, will pursue the general overland route over which we passed, and that by way of the Missouri river to Fort Benton; and that the whole route will, before many years, be marked by a continuous line of settlements, which the country is fully capable of sustaining.

SAMUEL R. BOND.

*Journalist.*

WASHINGTON, February 10, 1863.

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#### REPORT OF DR. DIBB.

*Northern overland expedition to Fort Walla-Walla, via Forts Abercrombie, Union, and Benton, Captain James L. Fisk, commanding.*

St. ANTHONY'S FALLS, January 7, 1863.

SIR: In the report which I have the honor to submit to you relative to the health of the parties under your immediate charge, and of the emigrants under your protection, I have happily an easy task, the general health being remarkably good; no epidemic or endemic disease prevailed, and we had no accident of account on the whole route.

The whole number in the train was one hundred and thirty, (130,) including ten (10) women and some eight (8) or ten (10) children

In travelling over the rolling prairie and coteau between Forts Abercrombie and Union cases were frequent of bilious sickness, diarrhœa, and boils. These generally occurred in persons who had led a sedentary life before starting on this journey, the change of manner of living, of food, and of water, with the necessary daily exercise, would produce a consequent change of habit of body.

The diarrhœa was probably accounted for, also, by the free use of fresh buffalo meat, which the train was supplied with every day after we were fifty (50) miles from Fort Abercrombie.

These disorders easily subsided under the use of evacuants and restriction to farinaceous diet for two or three days. We had one case of fever and ague in a man of the escort. This was not contracted on this expedition, he having had an attack while working on the Lower Mississippi a short time previous to joining us; he quickly recovered under the ordinary treatment.

The ground was dry and good for camping, and generally the water was good; although near and in the Côteau du Missouri there were many ponds of saline water, but by using care in selecting our camping grounds we did not suffer on this account. While in the Côteau du Missouri one of the emigrants (Mrs. Stark) was safely delivered of a son, and after resting 12 or 15 hours was ready to resume the journey. Mother and child got through well.

We saw no Indians until we neared the Côteau du Missouri, and there met a party of Assinaboines. Not communicating freely with them, we could not observe whether much disease prevailed among them. The chief (Broken Arm) got some medicine for the diarrhœa, which he said six or eight of his men suffered from.

Between Forts Union and Benton the travel was over dry, level ground, (in the valleys of the Missouri and Milk rivers.) While in the Missouri valley, and using water from the Missouri river, some cases of diarrhœa occurred from the too free use of it; for, although the water was pure, it was very muddy; the disorder abated directly on removing the cause.

In Milk River valley we were in daily communication with the Crow and Gros Ventres Indians. Many of the latter appeared to suffer from sore eyes, which, on closer examination, proved, in most cases, to be from gonorrhœal ophthalmia. Gonorrhœa and syphilis were very prevalent among them and some of the latter cases (syphilis) very severe.

The Crows would appear to be a more virtuous people, as few, or none of them were affected by these diseases.

At Fort Benton we had two cases of articular rheumatism, occurring in emigrants of middle age, and who were relieved by care and treatment before we left them.

From Fort Benton to Walla-Walla we had no disease, and scarcely a disorder. The weather was cooler, the water in the mountains pure, and all parties had become inured to the active, every day exercise, the sleeping in tents, and the very free use of fresh animal food.

I saw some cases of gunshot and arrow wounds while at Fort Benton, but these were among the Indians or half-breeds.

In closing this brief report, I would say that I was often and earnestly desired by my patients to thank you for your kindness and consideration for them during their sickness; as, also, to the commissary, (Mr. Langford,) who so cheerfully, under your orders, furnished to them rice, crackers, &c., which were necessary during their sickness, and which tended so materially to their quick recovery. In which I sincerely join, as to this, and your kindness, with that of all the officers of the expedition to me personally, made mine an easy duty, or rather a journey of pleasure.

I remain, sir, yours, very respectfully,

W. D. DIBB, M. D.,  
M. R. C. S. E.

Captain JAMES L. FISK.

*Itinerary of route from Fort Abercrombie to Fort Benton, as travelled by Captain James L. Fisk's overland expedition. By David Charlton, engineer.*

Date.	No. of camp.	Remarks.	Dist., odometer measurement.	Total distance.
			Miles.	Miles.
1862.				
July 7	1	Wild Rice river, four (4) feet deep, thirty-five (35) feet wide; built bridge; good grass and wood.....	4	4
8	2	Bend of Wild Rice river; wood and grass plenty.....	3½	
8	3	Small lake; no wood.....	10	
8	4	Shayenne river, six (6) to ten (10) feet deep, seventy-five (75) feet wide; built bridge; plenty of timber and grass on both sides; no wood between Nos. 2 and 4.....	2	15½
10	5	Maple river, twenty-five (25) feet wide, two (2) to six (6) feet deep; easily forded; plenty of wood and grass; no wood between Nos. 4 and 5; country level since leaving Fort Abercrombie.....		18
11	6	Small stream, branch of Maple river.....	9	
11	7	Branch of same stream; grass plenty; no wood.....	0½	9½
12	8	Maple river, second (2d) crossing; several marshes between Nos. 7 and 8; no wood.....	10	
12	9	Several small marshes; good water and grass; the country between Nos. 8 and 9 mostly low and marshy; no wood.....	5½	15½
14	10	Shayenne river, second (2d) crossing, sixty (60) feet wide and eighteen (18) inches deep; good fording, good grass, and plenty of wood; water plenty in ponds between Nos. 9 and 10; no wood since leaving Maple river at first (1st) crossing, and none between here and Lake Jessie country since leaving No. 5; rolling prairie.....		20
15	11	Lake; good grass and water; plenty of small lakes and marshes, with good water, between Nos. 10 and 11; first part of the day prairie very rolling; latter part, gently undulating.....		15½
16	12	Lakes Lydia and Jessie; water slightly brackish; spring one-quarter (¼) mile southwest of camp, in ravine on shore of Lake Lydia; plenty of wood and grass; numerous small ponds between Nos. 11 and 12; prairie rolling; no wood between Lake Jessie and White Wood lakes at No. 24, but plenty of buffalo chips.....		18
17	13	Stevens's "Great Slough," three hundred (300) to four hundred (400) feet wide; easily crossed in a dry season; in a wet season probably wagons would have to be drawn across with long ropes; "Bartlett's" spring, forty (40) rods west of crossing, on south side of slough.....	4½	
17	14	Small lake; good grass; numerous ponds and marshes between Nos. 13 and 14; prairie rolling.....	9	13½
18	15	Lake "Townsend," slightly saline; plenty of grass....	9	
18	16	Small stream, branch of the Jacques or James river....	4	
18	17	Several small marshes; good water and grass; plenty of buffalo chips; prairie gently rolling.....	6	19
19	18	Jacques river; good grass; the route does not cross Jacques river, but follows its course around the bend on the north side.....	8	

*Itinerary of route from Fort Abercrombie to Fort Benton, &c.—Continued.*

Date.	No. of camp.	Remarks.	Dist., odometer measurement.	Total distance.
1862.			<i>Miles.</i>	<i>Miles.</i>
July 19	19	Marsh; excellent water and grass; country, to within a mile of camp, a level plateau -----	11	19
21	20	Small lake, slightly saline -----	10	
21	21	Several small marshes, with good grass and water; numerous ponds and marshes between Nos 20 and 21; country very rolling -----	10	20
22	22	Shayenne river, third (3d) crossing; good grass; stream small, and crossed without difficulty; no wood -----	3	
22	23	Butte de Morale; plenty of grass and water; road passes close to the butte on the north side -----	7	
22	24	Slough, with cold spring, near White Wood lakes; grass plenty, and wood in the coulées near by; chain of lakes, extending in a northerly direction from this point nearly to Mouse river, known as White Wood lakes; water in some of them brackish -----	10½	20½
23	25	Small stream; several lakes between Nos 24 and 25; good grass -----	9	
23	26	Several small marshes; prairie gently rolling, and abounding in salt and fresh lakes; grass good -----	6½	15½
24	27	Wintering river, at the time of crossing, from two and a half (2½) to five (5) feet deep, and from two hundred (200) to three hundred (300) feet wide; miry bottom and grown up with rushes; one party made a bridge by mowing and packing rushes in river to support wagons, which were drawn across by hand with a cable one hundred and fifty (150) feet long; time occupied in crossing train of sixty (60) wagons, six (6) hours; no wood, but plenty of buffalo chips -----	8	
24	28	Pond on prairie; good water and grass, and plenty of buffalo chips -----	3	11
25	29	Small stream, tributary of Mouse river; water poor; no wood; some buffalo chips; plenty of grass and water between Nos. 28 and 29; prairie level, and abounding with marshes and ponds; our route is now along the level plateau overlooking the valley of the Mouse river, keeping from two (2) to five (5) miles from the river, to facilitate the crossing of the numerous coulées coming down from the Côteau du Missouri -----	14	
25	30	Several small marshes, with tolerably good water; no wood; Mouse river two (2) miles to the north; buffalo chips plenty -----	3½	17½
26	31	Lake; good water and grass; no wood -----	2	
26	32	Stream of excellent water in coulée; no wood -----	0¾	
26	33	Two coulées in close proximity, one with water and wood -----	4	
26	34	Coulée, with stream of excellent water, good grass, and plenty of wood -----	4	10¾
28	35	Coulée; wood, but no water; grass poor -----	3½	
28	36	Coulée; wood and water -----	2	
28	37	Pond, with good water and grass -----	7	

*Itinerary of route from Fort Abercrombie to Fort Benton, &c.—Continued.*

Date.	No. of camp.	Remarks.	Dist., odometer measurement.	Total distance.
			Miles	Miles.
1862.				
July 28	38	Pond, with good water and grass; several good camping places between Nos. 34 and 38 not here noted; camp about four (4) miles from river; country more rolling		
29	39	Coulée, with water and grass; no wood	4	16½
29	40	Coulée, with no water, but water in a marsh near by, and some grass; no wood	2	
29	41	Small marsh, with water and grass; no wood; buffalo chips plenty	5	
29	42	Pond, with good water and grass; no wood; plenty of buffalo chips; camp about four (4) miles from river; plateau gently rolling	2	
29	43	Pond; good grass; no wood; no good water since leaving No. 42	6½	15½
29	44	Pond, with good water and grass	9	
29	45	Small lake; good water and grass; plenty of water between this point and No. 43; no wood, but "bois du rache" plenty; country gently rolling; camp two and a half (2½) to three (3) miles from the river, and about the same distance from Côteau du Missouri, through which our route now passes in a more southerly direction	2½	
31	46	Small lake, with good water and grass; numerous lakes and ponds between Nos. 45 and 46; country rough and very rolling, but no difficulty experienced in travelling	9	20½
August 1	47	Small lake, with grass; numerous lakes and ponds between Nos. 46 and 47; country very rolling, and in some places rough and rocky	-----	16
2	48	At the foot of the "Côteau du Missouri;" latitude 48° 44'; water in a marsh and a spring in a coulée near by; grass good, and plenty of wood in coulées; no wood since leaving No. 36, but buffalo chips in abundance; the plateau on which we camped is one hundred and fifty (150) feet below the "Côteau du Missouri"	-----	18½
4	49	Small stream, nearly dry, with tolerably good water; we crossed several small coulées or ravines coming down from the côteau on our left, some of them containing wood and water	10	10
4	50	Small lake, about five (5) miles from côteau, with tolerably good water and grass; no wood; main direction being westerly; at No. 49 we found a bed of coal	10	
5	51	Small stream, supposed to be Sandy creek or one of its tributaries; plenty of water between Nos. 50 and 51; grass very good	8½	18½
5	52	Small pond of water half mile left of trail; grass plenty; no water for five (5) or six (6) miles back	10	
6	53	Pond; fair water and good grass	9½	19½
6	54	Lake; water poor and grass tolerable; since leaving camp No. 48 our main direction has been about southwest, (SW.), and from two (2) to six (6) miles from the côteau, which here makes a short turn to the northwest, (NW.); our route now enters the côteau	4½	
			9	



*Itinerary of route from Fort Abercrombie to Fort Benton, &c.—Continued.*

Date.	No. of camp.	Remarks.	Dist., odometer measurement.	Total distance.
1862.			Miles.	Miles.
August 6	55	Lake, with good water and tolerable grass.....	5	
6	56	Small lake, with good water and grass.....	3½	22
7	57	Deep valley, with some water and good grass; no water on our route since leaving No. 54, except at the points mentioned.....		11
8	58	Stream; no running water in it, but some standing in the ponds in its bed.....	10	
8	59	Pond, with tolerably good water; good grass; prairie rolling.....	7½	17½
9	60	Pond, with good water and some grass.....	6	
9	61	Spring in the side of a bluff, in a deep valley; grass poor; the spring flows from a large bed of coal, and is slightly impregnated with sulphur.....	6	
9	62	Stream, tributary of the east branch of "Little Muddy;" good water and grass; wood plenty for the first time since leaving No. 48; buffalo chips generally very abundant.....	7	19
<p>NOTE.—At this point the train halted, and remained in camp until the 12th of August. On the 11th instant visited Fort Union, fourteen (14) miles distant below, on the Missouri river, sending a wagon for the necessary supplies. The route to the fort over most of the way is over a high rolling prairie—a pretty good road to within three (3) miles of the fort, when the hills are more rocky and the descents in the valley very steep. The fort is some four hundred (400) or five hundred (500) feet below the road on the bluffs, which surround it.</p>				
12	63	West branch of "Little Muddy;" water somewhat alkaline; grass tolerably good; wood plenty; road level.....	5	
12	64	Water in a marsh, but poor grass; no wood.....	7	
12	65	Small stream; no running water; water in ponds in the bed of it; wood to the right, eighty (80) rods above road; good grass; road very fine.....	2¼	14¼
13	66	Cold spring, slightly sulphureous, coming out of a bed of coal.....	0½	
13	67	Small stream; good water and grass, and plenty of wood.....	9½	
13	68	Big Muddy river; excellent grass and plenty of drift-wood; road very fine; river seventy (70) to eighty (80) feet wide, three (3) to five (5) feet deep, and banks ten (10) feet high; crossed on the 14th by putting wagons into the stream, forming a bridge, on which the loads were carried across by the men; plenty of wood in coulées between this point and No. 65.....	5½	15½
14	69	Fort Moffat, trading-post on the Missouri; poor grass, but plenty of wood.....		5
15	70	Wood, water, and grass in the river bottom.....	10	

*Itinerary of route from Fort Abercrombie to Fort Benton, &c.—Continued.*

Date.	No. of camp.	Remarks.	Dist., odometer measurement.	Total distance.
			Miles.	Miles.
1862. August 15	71	Missouri river; plenty of wood and tolerably good grass; river banks soft clay; drove cattle a mile above in a bayou for water; no feed in bayou; road to day for the most part on the river bottom, close to the bluffs, and from two (2) to four (4) miles from river .....	5 $\frac{1}{4}$	15 $\frac{1}{4}$
16	72	Spring forty (40) rods to right of road .....	5	
16	73	Aspen or Poplar river, a fine stream; hard gravel bottom; easily forded; plenty of grass and wood; no wood or grass since leaving No. 71, and no water except at No. 72; road on the upland prairie slightly rolling .....	6	
16	74	Small stream, with good grass and water; no wood; no grass, water, or wood since leaving Poplar river .....	11	
16	75	Marshy lake; good grass and plenty of wood; road over bottom, and very fine spring at foot of upland, near camp .....	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	23 $\frac{1}{2}$
17	76	Marsh, with good water for stock, and spring near by, with excellent water; no wood, but good grass .....	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	
17	77	Small stream; wood, water, and good grass; road all day in the bottoms; no grass, wood, or water except at points noted .....	3 $\frac{1}{2}$	
18	78	Spring; no wood or grass .....	5	
18	79	Small stream, with water for stock; no wood .....	3 $\frac{1}{2}$	
18	80	Pond and spring near by; no wood .....	3 $\frac{1}{2}$	
18	81	Porcupine river; plenty of wood and tolerably good grass; no good camping place between Nos. 77 and 81; road for the first thirteen (13) miles good, over bottoms; balance upland .....	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	17 $\frac{1}{2}$
19	82	Small stream; no wood; good water and grass .....	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	
19	83	Milk river, about six (6) miles from its mouth; wood, and tolerably good grass; road over rolling prairie; no wood between Nos. 81 and 83; plenty of wood from this place to the last camp on Milk river, at No. 118, except at points noted .....	5 $\frac{3}{4}$	14 $\frac{1}{4}$
20	84	Little Porcupine river; good water but poor grass .....	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	
20	85	Milk river; tolerably good grass; road rough and gravelly .....	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	8 $\frac{1}{4}$
21	86	Milk river; poor grass; touched the river at several points .....		20
22	87	Willow creek; deep channel, which must have plenty of water in a wet season .....	2 $\frac{1}{4}$	
22	88	Small lake; wood and grass .....	3 $\frac{1}{4}$	
22	89	Pond; no wood; poor grass; water good .....	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	
22	90	Tributary of Milk river; one hundred (100) feet wide; sandy bottom; no running water; poor grass .....	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	17 $\frac{1}{2}$
23	91	First crossing of Milk river; grass poor; channel two hundred (200) feet wide; sandy bottom; easily forded at low water .....	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	
23	92	Marsh at left of trail on prairie; good grass and water .....	13	17 $\frac{1}{2}$
24	93	Milk river; grass poor; the road from Nos. 91 to 93 is over a rolling prairie, and very fine, but no wood and no water or grass except at No. 92 .....	5	5
25	94	Lake; fine water and good grazing .....	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	

*Itinerary of route from Fort Abercrombie to Fort Benton, &c.—Continued.*

Date.	No. of camp.	Remarks.	Dist., odometer measurement.	Total distance.
			Miles.	Miles.
1862.				
August 25	95	Lake; good water and grass		
25	96	Second crossing of Milk river; good ford; gravelly and sandy bottom; wood in abundance; grass poor; no wood between Nos. 93 and 96, and no water except at the points noted; road over rolling prairie.	13 $\frac{3}{4}$	18 $\frac{3}{4}$
26	97	Milk river; poor grass	8 $\frac{1}{4}$	
26	98	Pond, with good water and grass; road nearly all day in the bottom	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	15 $\frac{1}{4}$
28	99	Milk river; grass poor	7	
28	100	Milk river; grass good	2 $\frac{3}{4}$	
28	101	Pond; good grass; water and wood	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	
28	102	Dry stream; wood and grass	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	
28	103	Milk river; good grazing	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	21 $\frac{3}{4}$
29	104	Small stream; wood and water in small quantities	2 $\frac{1}{4}$	
29	105	Dried-up stream, near Milk river, where we crossed; wood and good grass	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	
29	106	Milk river; good grass	10 $\frac{3}{4}$	18 $\frac{1}{2}$
30	107	Dried-up stream; no wood or grass	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	
30	108	Milk river; grass poor	1	
30	109	"O-mut-pa-pasha" or Meldrum river; tolerably good camping place	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	
30	110	Milk river; good grass	0 $\frac{3}{4}$	
30	111	"Two Lands" river; good camping place	5 $\frac{1}{4}$	
30	112	Small marshy stream; water and grass; no wood; excellent grazing between Nos. 111 and 112	2	
30	113	Milk river; good grass	0 $\frac{3}{4}$	17 $\frac{3}{4}$
Sept. 1	114	Milk river; good grass; here the road leaves the bottom	8	
1	115	Milk river; good grass; road from No. 114 over rolling prairie	5	
1	116	Milk river, third (3d) crossing; good ford and camping place	2	
1	117	Milk river; tolerably good grass; here the road passes over a point of the upland	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	
1	118	Milk river; good camp; here the road leaves the river and takes a southwest (SW.) course	2	18 $\frac{1}{2}$
2	119	Beaver creek; wood and water, but poor grass	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	
2	120	Dry bed of stream; wood, but poor grazing	6 $\frac{3}{4}$	
2	121	Dry bed of stream; no wood; grass poor	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	
2	122	Box Alder creek one and one-half (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ ) miles to right of our trail; wood, water, and grass; no wood or grass since leaving Beaver creek at No. 119; road very fine	4	19 $\frac{1}{2}$
3	123	Stream; wood, water, and tolerable grass	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	
3	124	Big Sandy river; water and grass, but no wood	4 $\frac{1}{4}$	
3	125	Springs in bed of stream; plenty of good water; no wood; grazing very good; road fine; no wood or water since leaving No. 124, and no grass, except in the vicinity of No. 125	19 $\frac{3}{4}$	29 $\frac{1}{2}$
4	126	Maria's river; plenty of grass, water, and wood; road over high rolling prairie until we reach the bluff, just at the valley of the Maria's the descent to the bottom being very steep		13

*Itinerary of route from Fort Abercrombie to Fort Benton, &c.—Continued.*

Date.	No. of camp.	Remarks.	Dist., odometer measurement	Total distance
1862. Sept.	5	127 Teton river; wood, water, and grass; the route from No. 126 is one and a half ( $1\frac{1}{2}$ ) miles up the valley and five (5) miles on the plateau between the Teton and Missouri .....	Miles.	Miles.
	5	128 Teton river, four and one-half ( $4\frac{1}{2}$ ) miles from Fort Benton; wood, water, and grass in abundance; this is our nearest camp to Fort Benton.....	$6\frac{1}{2}$	
		Distance from Fort Abercrombie to Fort Benton, eight hundred and thirty (830) miles.	$2\frac{1}{2}$	9

DAVID CHARLTON,  
Minneapolis, Minnesota, January 29, 1863.

Captain JAMES L. FISK,  
Commanding Expedition.